Market as Place & Space of Economic Exchange

Perspectives from Archaeology & Anthropology









edited by Hans Peter Hahn and Geraldine Schmitz

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Preface

In several respects, studying markets is a challenge. From a distance, and regardless of how you define it, the market may appear a perfectly standard and commonsensical object of study. However, the closer you come to the phenomena of the market, the more difficult it is to sustain an analytical perspective on how to describe and interpret them. Perhaps this is a specific problem for the disciplines represented in this volume. Although we have good reason to regard markets as an important aspect of most societies that these disciplines study, it is far from easy to decide which elements of society should be considered as belonging to the market and which should be treated as independent of it.

Since the constitution of the research training group on 'Value and Equivalence', which organized the conference 'Markets as Place' in 2010 at Goethe University in Frankfurt (Main), the importance of markets was obvious to participating scholars. Whereas a broad range of cultural and social phenomena indicate the value of material objects in those societies that members of the group had studied, dealing with 'equivalence' was postponed several times. It appeared difficult to gain a deeper understanding of how to investigate relations of equivalence between different artefacts in past societies and those studied by anthropologists. This explains, at least partially, why markets constitute a challenge, especially with regard to the question of whether or not they define relations of 'equivalence'.

Given the difficulty in finding clear indications of market activities, we decided to adopt an open conceptual framework for both the conference and the papers in this volume. Whereas for some contributors the market seems to be ubiquitous in their fields of research, for others, questioning the existence and impact of a market already poses a difficulty in itself.

In order to address this quite uneven approach to markets, all the contributors were invited to choose freely whether to perceive the market in the first instance as a special place, or rather as a principle and mode of exchange. Both approaches are relevant to the contributions in this volume, and, as will be shown more in detail in the introduction, we do not treat them as strict alternatives, but rather as overlapping and sometimes even indistinguishable aspects. The contributions to this volume do not have a unified or overarching concept of the market. Instead, the variety of understandings of this phenomenon was acknowledged as a starting point in producing this volume. In the distant past, as well as in contemporaneous societies that have little connection with the global system of commodity flows, markets might have quite limited relevance, with very different understandings. We consider this 'perspective from the margins' to constitute a specific contribution to the wider debate on what a market is and how it may change society.

In the twenty-first century, in an era, when most societies have become part of the market, regardless of whether this is a market place or part of the global principle of exchange, it might be of particular value to examine more closely societies that are less familiar with the notion of a market. This is what can be found in the contributions in this volume. Sometimes this might lead to a certain estrangement, and sometimes the indications of the existence of a market may appear surprising or go beyond what an economist might expect. But in all cases, it is worth examining more closely what constitutes the culturally specific molding of market phenomena.

Although this volume situates its contributions within the wider frameworks of economic archaeology and economic anthropology, economic aspects in the narrow sense of the term are not its focus. Instead we prioritize the cultural and social consequences of the existence of a market and the adoption of a market principle. All the contributions stress that markets come into being through historical processes and the socially acknowledged actions of particular social groups. There is no market without cultural embedding, and every market needs market actors who will actively use the market for their habitual or even professional activities.

The editors of this volume would like to thank all the contributors for their cooperation and patience through the various steps of the editing process. We also extend our thanks to the research training group ‘Value and Equivalence’ (GRK 1576/2) and the German Research Foundation (DFG) for making this publication possible. Last but not least, we wish to think Johannes Skiba for taking care of so many of the practical aspects of editing the various chapters in this volume.

Hans Peter Hahn and Geraldine Schmitz
Frankfurt (Main), December 2017

Chapter 1

Introduction. Markets as places: Actors, structures and ideologies

Hans P. Hahn

It is common nowadays to believe that the market always prevails, and that the dams erected by kings, priests and communities cannot long hold back the tides of money. This is naive. Brutal warriors, religious fanatics and concerned citizens have repeatedly managed to trounce calculating merchants, and even to reshape the economy. (Yuval N. Harari 2014: 187)

Introduction

As a rule, at least two and possibly many more meanings are assigned to the term ‘market’. First, there is the idea of the ‘market as the principle of the availability of goods’ and as a regulatory mechanism controlling access to and exchanges of goods. Secondly, there is the concept of the market as a spatial entity of activity. The market is a social and economic locality, often also a centre in which many people actively participate. The categorical separation of the two meanings is a manifestly analytical procedure which is frequently applied in the field of economics, as well as in the humanities.

However, it is also valuable to highlight the unavoidable blurring and overlapping of these two meanings. Thus, in many cases it is not clear whether a certain transaction should be regarded as an exchange of goods and, as a consequence, as an action in line with market requirements, or represents the bestowal of a gift which does not require to be directly

reciprocated and is thus considered external to the logic of the market. It is possible that the location provides circumstantial evidence, even though gifts might also be made in somewhere identified as a market place. Conversely, many transactions that follow market mechanisms take place in locations other than a market place (or supermarket). In view of the limited validity and the impossibility of categorically separating the two meanings – the market principle and the market place as a social location – it is appropriate to take both meanings into account and to decide on a case by case basis which meaning has the priority. In any case, overriding considerations suggest that a degree of overlap between the two meanings should be regarded as the norm. This can be demonstrated by taking a look at any randomly selected market place, where it is usually a precondition of transactions involving goods that all the parties involved implicitly accept the market principle. On a regular basis, it is safe to assume that the meanings of the market as 'market principle' and 'market as location' meet in the market place. Therefore, this differentiation will not play a central role in the contributions to this volume.

Today, the market as a location of social interaction is increasingly losing its links to space and indeed its whole spatial relevance. Global ties and connections mean that today's market activities include direct, socially significant interactions between individuals based in very different locations. At the present day, a localized place hardly ever now enjoys a position of priority over the de-spatialized market. As can also be seen in some of the contributions to this volume, long-distance trade already played a significant role in the past. While the consumers of today frequently possess nothing but a limited knowledge of the origins of everyday goods, we do not know to what extent knowledge of the origins and sources of goods existed in earlier periods, nor do we know the significance, if any, of the role played by these origins.

Therefore, throughout this book, the term 'market' will be understood and used in its double meaning, without making explicit the analytical separation or juxtaposition mentioned above. Generally speaking, formally limiting the term does not appear to be at all meaningful because the contributions included here are largely based on observations and interviews at specific,

concrete locations. Market and market actions and trading should be understood primarily and essentially on the basis of observed archaeological and ethnographic phenomena. As a consequence, the focus here is on material, social and cultural observations and on the phenomena assigned to the market. Conceptual tools are relevant, but only to the extent that it is possible for the authors to link their findings to such theories.

By referring to the priorities given to observability in this volume, as well as to market actions and trading and to market structure, some indicators for a provisional definition of the term become evident. Another, equally extensive definition of the market is provided by Stuart Plattner (1989), namely that any transaction in goods or services which does not occur within a kinship group or does not take the form of a payment of tribute can be conceptualized as a market transaction. This is a very far-reaching definition, which at first sight contributes little to clarification of the term. Nonetheless it is useful to take this wide definition into account exactly because it does make clear the extraordinarily broad spectrum of different transactions that can be perceived as market trading.

In this context, Plattner points to an important element which plays a role in all the contributions to this volume: a market transaction, or similarly a market as a place, creates a relationship between goods and people, as well as between people and social groups. Through the market, people become buyers or sellers, able to discern who has certain goods at his or her disposal and who is able to acquire them. Markets connect people, but they also create various different categories, depending on whether they allow access to the goods or not. On the empirical level, therefore, Plattner's definition inspires a search for the phenomena and effects of such transactions.

A natural definition of the concept of 'market', one oriented towards phenomena, could also be derived from observing the categories of goods on offer and being sold. For example, we could look at markets for foodstuffs, handmade products or secondhand goods. Indeed, this method has been employed in several contributions to this book. However, in considering the possibility of deriving a general definition of the concept of 'market' from this, a fundamental problem arises: there is barely a single object which cannot become a tradeable good.

In his classic contribution to the collection *The Social Life of Things* (1986), Igor Kopytoff made clear the extent to which every object has the potential to become a tradeable good, by and large constituting a permanent area of social negotiations. Across all ages and in all cultures, people have repeatedly come to differing perceptions as to what can be considered a purchasable good and what, for whatever reasons, should not be traded at all. This suggests that the range of objects on offer in a market does not have any stable boundaries. The question as to the permissibility of the purchase or sale of certain objects is notoriously contentious and precarious, often sparking fundamental debates on the identity of a society and its value system. Even though modern societies have developed concerns regarding the endless expansion of the range of tradeable goods, there appears to be no coherent and overarching tendency, as suggested in Marxist philosophy, for example, for the scope of tradeable goods to be permanently enlarged. In the following the market sphere is treated as having an inherent tendency to be dynamic, sometimes expanding but also shrinking at other times.

Commodification, here understood as the process through which personal goods become anonymous tradeable goods, whether temporarily or permanently, has recently become an important field of research. Academic experts, like Daniel Miller, for example, have even recommended describing material culture as a whole solely in terms of the concept of commodities and their consumption (Miller 1995). Miller's suggestion is based on the argument that it is only at the moment a material thing is purchased that the whole spectrum of the possibilities of consumption will be opened up. Only the elimination of social embedding as it occurs, at least seemingly, at the moment of purchase allows immediate confrontation with the object and thus direct analysis of its materiality. Building on these theoretical insights, one thing at least can be established: that the appearance of new goods on the market often marks the beginning of new social relationships and may be even be regarded as an expression of radical cultural change.

An extreme but at the same time important example is the transatlantic slave trade, which took place in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries and made a significant contribution to the form of the modern world of commodities and the normality of global inter-connectivity (Presthold 2012).

Despite these historical findings, from today's point of view slaves are not commodities (Satz 2010). The example shows, however, how contentious the limits and boundaries of market dealings are. Generally speaking, there is no consensus on the historical development of commodification. In contrast to the thesis of a continuous expansion of the market mentioned above, it is also important to consider historical moments when markets have been suppressed. For example, the history of consumption in Europe, which can also be read as a history of the market on this continent, reveals various historical effects of control and restrictions over the market sphere.

In other regions of the world, conflicts surrounding the appearance of certain goods on the market can be followed much more clearly. Thus, Georg Elwert argued some time ago that corruption should be understood as a part of a generalized market (Elwert 1985). While in Europe certain services, for example, court judgements, may not be offered as goods, their 'sale' being considered a crime, in other societies these pursuits are covered by the field of activities which are in line with market trading.

As such controversial evaluations of transactions make obvious, in many concrete, historically and geographically deliminated cases, the description of goods may be a practical way of reaching a better understanding of the phenomenon we call the 'market'. However, because the borders of a market are always in flux, it is barely possible to use the term 'categories of commodities' as a basis for a broader understanding of markets as a whole.

For this reason, there is no separate section on 'commodities' in this introduction, whereas several other aspects will be outlined in greater detail in the following. We will concern ourselves with actors in the markets, the development of equivalence, the spatial structure of markets and networks as a special characteristic of the interrelationships between goods and people in the market place, as well as the market as a model. Following these sections, the individual contributions to this volume will be briefly summarized.

Actors in the market

Historians of consumption have dated the beginnings of the consumer society back to the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries (McKendrick *et al.* 1982; Trentmann 2009). The term 'consumer society' suggests a situation in

which, in the narrow sense, the majority of goods appear as ‘commodities’. They are no longer produced by the individuals who use them or exchanged with their neighbours, but rather are purchased, for example, in a market. The point in time when society switched from being one where domestic production and subsistence were foregrounded to a society in which the acquisition of commodities represents the most important method of access to consumable goods is disputed. From a historical point of view, this undoubtedly represents a profound transformation, and it is not by chance that this is frequently associated with the earliest transcontinental trade links. In the England of the seventeenth century, this pertains to the then rapidly growing trade in cotton and sugar, both products of the triangular transatlantic trade.

Professionalization also played a significant role: long-distance trade was only possible because of the existence of trading companies and of considerable specialist knowledge in purchasing and processing (Findlay and O’Rourke 2007). Both sugar and cotton are plantation products that require a high level of technical investment in their production and processing (Mintz 1985; Beckert 2007), in addition to long trade routes. Against this backdrop, demand constantly grew, at least at the time.

Traders therefore had to meet the challenge of ensuring constant levels of availability and quality. A further aspect arises from issues of standardization. To offer something as a commodity repeatedly means, at least to some extent, to promise consistency of quality. When a commodity appears on the market, it is at first anonymous: it is the traders (or producers) who guarantee its particular qualities. But for the buyer this is, in a similar sense, also valid: in buying the goods they are expressing their trust in them and their sellers. John Harold Plumb supports the theory of the modernization of society through the assertion of the market principle, pointing in particular to printed media – books and newspapers – the distribution of which increased rapidly in the eighteenth century (Plumb 1982).

Printed products are a very typical example of a standardized commodity, for which at the same time the promise of certain properties is valid. A further characteristic is also of significance here: those commodities that

feature in the process of an increasing orientation towards consumption rarely fall into the category of basic needs. As Stephen Hugh-Jones shows (1992) using the example of the increasing market penetration into the Amazon Basin, a more general formulation can be made: the scope of the goods and the markets asserts itself by means of luxury articles, that is, of goods that go beyond everyday needs. Paradoxically, the negative perception of the market and the sensation of dependence on it only come to the fore later on, namely when basic goods such as food have become available mainly as a commodity (Weismantel 1991).

With this, some of the characteristics of traders and vendors as actors in the market arena have been outlined. Alongside professionalization, the promise that certain features of the commodities on offer will generally be constant has been highlighted. It is exactly these aspects which make participation in the market interesting in the first place: if goods do not have these qualities, then it is better to buy them somewhere else or not to buy them at all and then make them yourself.

Within a longer historical perspective – including archaeological findings – the idea of a temporally definable 'consumerist turn' seems to be an unnecessary or even problematic restriction. Consumption and participation in the market were already playing an important role in significantly earlier periods, as, for example, substantiated by Karl Polanyi in his case study of ancient Greece (Polanyi 1957). The idea of a linear development is altogether far too oriented towards quantitative data. For many periods, as for some non-European regions of the world, we should accept that it is hardly possible to evaluate the significance of the market for a specific society at all adequately. A pure estimate of the quantity of goods traded is not enough to provide an understanding of the specific evaluation of markets.

Additionally, Polanyi pointed to a special feature of groups of traders in ancient Greece: alongside the free citizens and the slaves, the *metic* tradesmen formed a sharply distinguished population group in the city state of Athens. *Metics* were subject to a special tax, were not allowed to purchase land and had only partial civil rights (Spahn 1995). Even though they were by no way only tradesmen, still, according to Polanyi, the social structure of

the city state demonstrates the possibility of a targeted control of trade and markets (Polanyi 1944). Polanyi's lasting contribution to defining the characteristics of professional market actors is the call to compare: it is always worthwhile to examine which social boundaries exist between the various market participants and through which regulatory systems active participation in the market is limited (Dalton 1968).

Indeed, there is a paradigm to be discovered within this structure, one which has appeared repeatedly in many contexts in different societies and at different times. In these cases, a special position or often even a degree of separation went along with the attribute 'trader' (Aspers and Beckert 2008: 227). For instance, this is the case with the history of the Jews in Europe, for whom trade often played a prominent role, as well as for Arab tradesmen in West Africa (Van der Laan 1992) and the Indian populations of East and Central Africa. In all cases, the diasporic nature of the group has a special relationship with participation in market activities (Eades 1993). At the same time, this becomes of secondary importance if we are dealing with an ethnic, religious or rather simply a professional identity.

In a wider sense, traders as a group of actors can also be regarded as innovators. It is thus often 'novel goods' that are received into society through trade. This is valid for the historically older examples of books, spices, cotton and sugar mentioned earlier, but also to a lesser degree for many industrially manufactured innovations which, without market places and traders, would never have found their way to consumers and into society alone. The linking of markets with innovation is only valid when the social aspect of the acceptance of novelty is considered in particular. At the same time, the fact that not only customers but also the tradesmen themselves must be ready to accept innovation must also be taken into account. In this context, the traders' material equipment can provide important information about their role in local markets (Schweizer 1993).

Still today it is not possible to make a general statement as to which social changes were generated along with the transformation from an economic system based on autonomy and subsistence into one oriented towards markets. It is certain that today, throughout the whole world, there is no longer any society for whom participation in the market does not

represent an important method for the acquisition of goods (Spittler 2002). Despite the current emergence of new tendencies opposed to the dominance of commodities – for example, in the sharing economy (Hahn 2012; Widlok 2016) – the dominance of markets as *the* method of access to everyday goods remains unbroken up until the present day.

Markets and the equivalence of commodities

Consideration of the various groups of actors in the context of the market suggests a further definition that will be presented here, at least as an option. This definition was first put forward by Roger Guesnerie (1996), but then taken up by Michel Callon (1998) and brought to fruition in the concept of market network analysis. According to Guesnerie, a market is an instrument for the coordination of diverse actors who (a) pursue their own interests, (b) have different interests and (c) solve conflicts by fixing prices. According to this definition, which is oriented towards the description of relationships, a market is in the first place a forum or an interface where opposing sellers and buyers appear and repeatedly use specific conflict-solving strategies: they engage in negotiating prices because they are concerned with the achievement of a relation of equivalence.

At the first level of reflection, Callon agrees with this definition because it leads to several convincing access points to describe the market. For example, it can be assumed that all actors in the market have certain qualities at their disposal: they are prepared to negotiate over goods and interests and to quantify them, that is, convert them into prices. This definition brings with it even more advantages: it describes very well the internal structures of the market (= encounters between opposed buyers and sellers) and a process, namely the negotiation of a price. Apparently, all market participants have a kind of 'calculative agency' at their command, according to which a relation between goods and another between goods and people are created by means of the calculation.

At this point, and introducing the second level of reflection, Callon's criticism becomes more significant. As he appositely notes, the interest in calculation is itself a highly paradoxical characteristic. Is the theory of *homo oeconomicus* based on a hypothesis that refers to *homo calculus*? In this

specific definition of the market, a readiness to calculate seems to be the only condition for market participation. In this way, an overlap is created which is only based on one kind of action. Callon critically asks whether the economic theory might work as a *self-fulfilling prophecy* by simplifying the market model to such an extent that all incalculable relations between market actors are obfuscated.

The disinterest in any other quality of the person is a hypothetical supposition, and, in any case, it only concerns a very narrow time span: it is only valid for the length of its appearance in the market, as the same individuals meet in other social contexts and very probably want to know more about one another. Guesnerie's model of the market as an interface between various groups of actors necessarily adopts a kind of temporary dis-embedding, which is, in its own right, highly questionable.

This is equally valid for the actors' readiness to produce an equivalence by negotiating a price. In no way does the negotiation of a price represent a lasting quality or the properties of any traded goods. Any actually established price is rather a highly specific relation, one that is contextually tightly deliminated. Equivalences created by the market are neither non-transient nor universal.

Guesnerie's idea of the market as a forum for the creation of relations involves a truly ambivalent definition of it. On the one hand, it is based on questionable assumptions regarding the actors' readiness to carry out such calculations and seeing them as being action-guiding. On the other hand, this definition reveals more clearly than any other description one characteristic of the market, namely the possibility of determining an equivalence and thus reaching a consensus. This equivalence stands in a strange relationship to the world of people and things. As illustrated, it depends on the abstraction that every other relationship between people is meaningless and irrelevant. Furthermore, it dispenses with any consideration of the non-market properties of things.

This model of the market implicitly stands for a shallow world, poor in its material and personal qualities. Everything is devoid of relevance, except what is born from the relations of equivalence. This model does, however, yield its own material culture, namely the objects used to record the

relationships of equivalence and to measure volumes, weights and other dimensions (Renfrew 2010). No market exists without these special things which safeguard transactions. This holds true whether we are looking at a simple set of mechanical scales or at modern computer programmes which register stock market values and issue recommendations to buy or sell. The hypothesis that money, in whatever form, represents a central element in a material culture of the market that is described in this way becomes evident in this framework.

Central to the theory introduced in this section is the idea that the market has the potential to generate equivalence. It is as though a fundamental human characteristic, which otherwise stays in the background, emerges in the market, namely to determine an equal value through calculation. Here we are obviously dealing only with the so-called 'exchange value', the paradoxical characteristics of which have been manifest since Karl Marx (Hahn 2014).

As Callon shows even more clearly in a later article, during this process sight is often lost of the qualities of the goods: traders are also concerned not to lose their certainties as to the qualities of the goods because of the interest in fixing a price (Callon *et al.* 2002). A world that is viewed as a chain of interfaces and negotiations, but in which the properties of things play a subordinate role, is a network. Therefore, in the following section, the concept of the market as a network will be examined more in detail.

Markets as networks?

Traders and markets create structures, and at the same time they need such structure as a prerequisite for their actions. Although historically there have been very powerful and relatively stable associations of tradesmen, such as the Hanseatic League or the Dutch Trading Companies of the seventeenth century (Braudel 1979), analyses of markets and trade structures are today dominated by a metaphor which rather suggests weaker and more flexible links, that is, the image of the network. The idea that local markets are hubs in a supra-regional network of commodity flows and traders is for many reasons a very attractive one.

The appeal of this metaphor can in the first place be explained by certain qualities such as flexibility and flat hierarchies (Tacke 2000; Bommes and Tacke 2011). Networks are based on contact between their elements, irrespective of whether reference is being made to the tradesmen in a market place or to markets made up of mutually intertwined structures. The concept of the network is in the first instance a purely formal description of how such elements fit together. The network metaphor as such does not make any reference to the contents and the motivation behind the perpetuation of the structure. This fits very well with the approaches to the market that have been introduced thus far. First, the market is scalable: regardless of whether it is a large or a small market, the basic principle stays the same. Additionally, markets and traders are not nailed down to certain goods (= contents): the same network can develop quite different fields of professional activity at different times. Finally, many though not all properties of commodities tend to be less relevant when it comes to establishing equivalences.

Markets are structures which are analogous to networks. This metaphor encourages thought about further aspects which may contribute significantly to a more differentiated description of internal structures. The first important question relates to the boundaries of a network. If a network makes specific advantages available to its members, then it is undoubtedly significant to make this relative advantage available exclusively to them. As a rule, open networks are weak networks (Barabasi and Bondbeau 2004). The closing of a network is therefore of some importance, although this does not mean, however, that the acceptance of new members is completely precluded.

This is why each network is equipped with an access control mechanism. Taking the market place or trading groups as examples, who grants access to new participants? This is quite obviously a decisive question for the continued existence of markets: if there are too many traders and goods, many participants will not be able to reach the expected level of turnover and must quit. If there are not enough traders in a market, customers lose interest. Are there any fixed criteria controlling access to the market? Even though the so-called ‘gate-keepers’ are not situated at the centre of networks but rather on the periphery, they act as powerful players (Warms 1994).

Within this context, Mark S. Granovetter (1985) emphasises the significance of so-called ‘weak ties’ for the continued existence of markets. It is not direct dependence which forms the basis of markets, but rather similar interests and the recognition of congruous skills.

In opposition to the positive aspects of the image of the market as a network, namely their flexibility and lack of hierarchy, there are also ambivalent aspects which are sometimes obfuscated in using this metaphor. These relate to the maintenance of the borders and to the frequently overlooked power of the ‘gate-keepers’. Ultimately, this metaphor has its limits at the point where content becomes relevant. A network cannot explain why certain goods are included in trade, and there are no indications as to which terms need to be applied to maintain the boundaries of a network successfully.

As already mentioned, the network is a structural concept. This implies inequality, even if only weakly pronounced. Certain participants in a network have more power, others less. It is useful to take a closer look at this question of power. To this end, it will be pertinent to bring a second, competing metaphor on board, namely that of the commodity chain (Gereffi *et al.* 2003).

While networks depict a flat structure which, to a certain extent, unfolds on one level only, chains are by nature polar structures which convey connections and sometimes even tensions. The literature therefore also distinguishes between *producer-driven commodity chains* and *consumer-driven commodity chains* (Sturgeon 2001). Both concepts describe a complex construction with different elements which are dependent on one another. Commodity chains encompass, for example, the procurement of the materials required for production, distribution, advertising, sales and the consumption itself. Current theories work on the supposition that there is an increasing level of consumer power (Leslie and Reimer 1999), but modelling from the angle of the producers is also plausible: today, globally operating companies define the qualities of the product and the style in which the products are offered by traders. By advertising and selecting channels of distribution, these global players are to a large extent able to determine in

which manner and equipped with which meanings a certain product reaches the consumer.

The model of the *(global) commodity chain* is essential when it comes to explaining newly developing imbalances through local markets, as well as global trade relations. If the commodity chain is considered a structural concept, then it provides an efficient model for the explanation of global imbalances in the age of globalization. As already noted with reference to the network, the potential for scaling is also valid here: the metaphor of a 'chain' is useful when it comes to revealing interdependencies on the small scale of the local market as well as globally. The commodity chain thus invariably discloses states of dependence or imbalance.

Some years ago, economists identified the tension between the terms 'network' and 'commodity chain' and highlighted their complementary character. In order to illustrate this, they coined the term 'netchain' (Lazzarini *et al.* 2001; Fig. 1.1). This method is frequently used in the analysis of small rural markets and of the production of and trade in foodstuffs (Walo 2016). Associated with the concept of the netchain is the desire to show how the building of groups takes place to complement mutual dependence. The juxtaposition of commodity chains and networks is not, however, simply a question of observation: the use of such metaphors is also a decision made during the investigation process with a view to defining a focus.

Markets are extraordinarily flexible structures. At the same time, it cannot be denied that they create dependencies. Even if it is not generally possible to determine the direction of such dependencies, the aspect of concealed interdependence should not be neglected when considering markets. People are interested in participating in market activities because it allows them to gain access to unique and novel goods. In other words, markets broaden horizons. At the same time, new dependencies are created because the actors have to rely on other people. This is valid for the relationships between producers, wholesalers and traders in a specific market, and even for the consumers themselves. It is of vital importance never to overlook either dimension, not that of the network, nor that of the commodity chain.

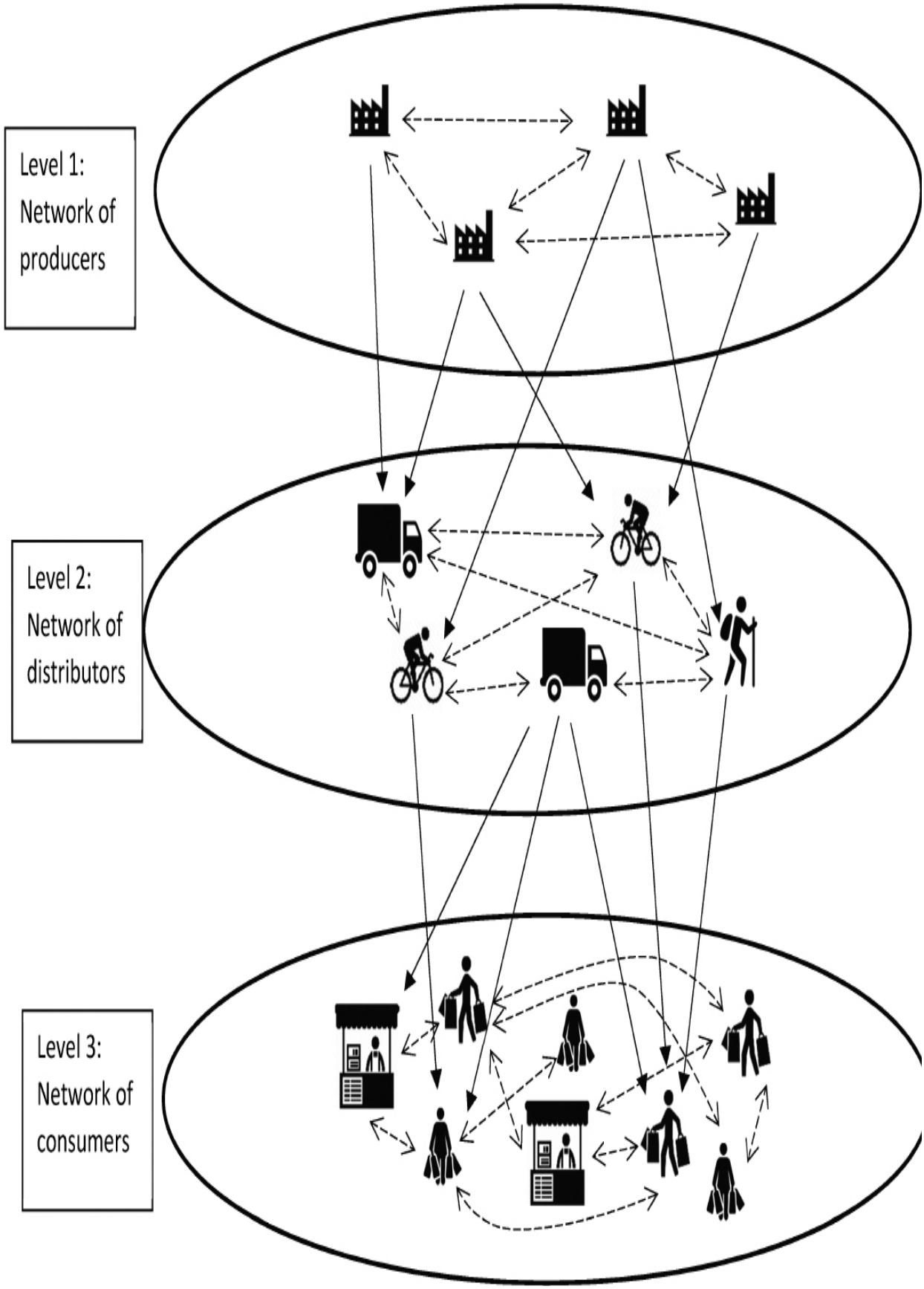

Level 1:
Network of
producers
Level 2:
Network of
distributors
Level 3:
Network of
consumers

Fig. 1.1: Networks and supply chains exist parallel. The term 'netchain' highlights the complementary character of horizontal structures (= networks) and vertical structures (= supply chain or commodity chain).

Spatial approaches regarding the centrality of markets

Against the backdrop of the complexity of markets, it may be useful to point to some of the specific paths to access to markets mentioned earlier. We are dealing with features which may in many cases be identified through observation and may explain some of the functions of markets very satisfactorily. The phenomenon of centrality is of key interest here. In many societies, markets are considered as central places or institutions which have a meaning with respect to what goes on socially and culturally. In these cases the importance of markets goes far beyond their economic function. Almost everywhere markets are not simply places where goods are exchanged, but rather multifunctional places of gathering where news may be exchanged, and other social and political activities take place. In addition, the centrality of markets is often expressed in terms of the connection between religion and the market. As David Haddorff (2000) has shown in greater detail, this relation exhibits partially contradictory meanings. Adopting a specific religious character for the maket sphere may by a strategy of piggybacking non-market structures. As Richard Blanton (2013:30) convincingly argues, parastatal structures as well as aspects of the sacralization of the market sphere may contribute to stabilize the autonomy of the market. Thus market autonomy becomes a common motive for traders to protect an established market scheme against influences from politics and society.

As already indicated in the previous section, markets generate structures. Centrality may be appropriately regarded as an element of this structural differentiation. According to Brian Schwimmer (1979), the quality of 'centrality' may be regarded as a parameter in at least two respects. He mentions the following:

1. The spatial centrality of markets. A market place is a location with a certain spatial catchment area within which distance seems manageable

for the user. In the context of certain available methods of transport, different radii may be valid accordingly.

2. The centrality of markets in the context of organizational theory. Not only are objective distance and methods of transport significant, locations of production and concentrations of consumers may also contribute to the elucidation of 'centrality'.

These two assumptions do not represent alternatives but rather constitute complementary dimensions of the positioning of a market. Geography of course plays a significant role, and historically central markets were frequently set up along important transport routes, for example, river crossings. However, proximity to the location of the production of certain goods very often plays a role in the acceptance of a market (Fig. 1.2). Two obvious examples of this are industrial centres in Europe and, in the precolonial past, centres of iron production in Africa. In every individual case it is worth examining the course of development that a particular market has undergone under specific spatial conditions or through having specific access to products. Schwimmer (1979) presents the example of markets in the coastal regions of West Africa. Fishery products are sold at these locations even though these markets have only a limited catchment area at their disposal. The good supply compensates for the lower number of consumers in the vicinity.

To a certain extent, spatial distribution corresponds to the metaphor of the network mentioned in the last section: even if market participants have to cover unequal distances, the differences are slight. Fundamentally, markets may be represented in the form of spatial nets, as shown in Figure 1.1. By contrast, the organization of the provision of goods is associated with the idea of the commodity chain; here, we are dealing with dependence on particular goods, for example, iron or fish. Stuart Plattner (1989) specifies these forms of modelling with reference to thresholds: how great can the distance to consumers be while maintaining the motivation to participate in the market? How close can market locations be to one another without them suffering from a lack of clients?

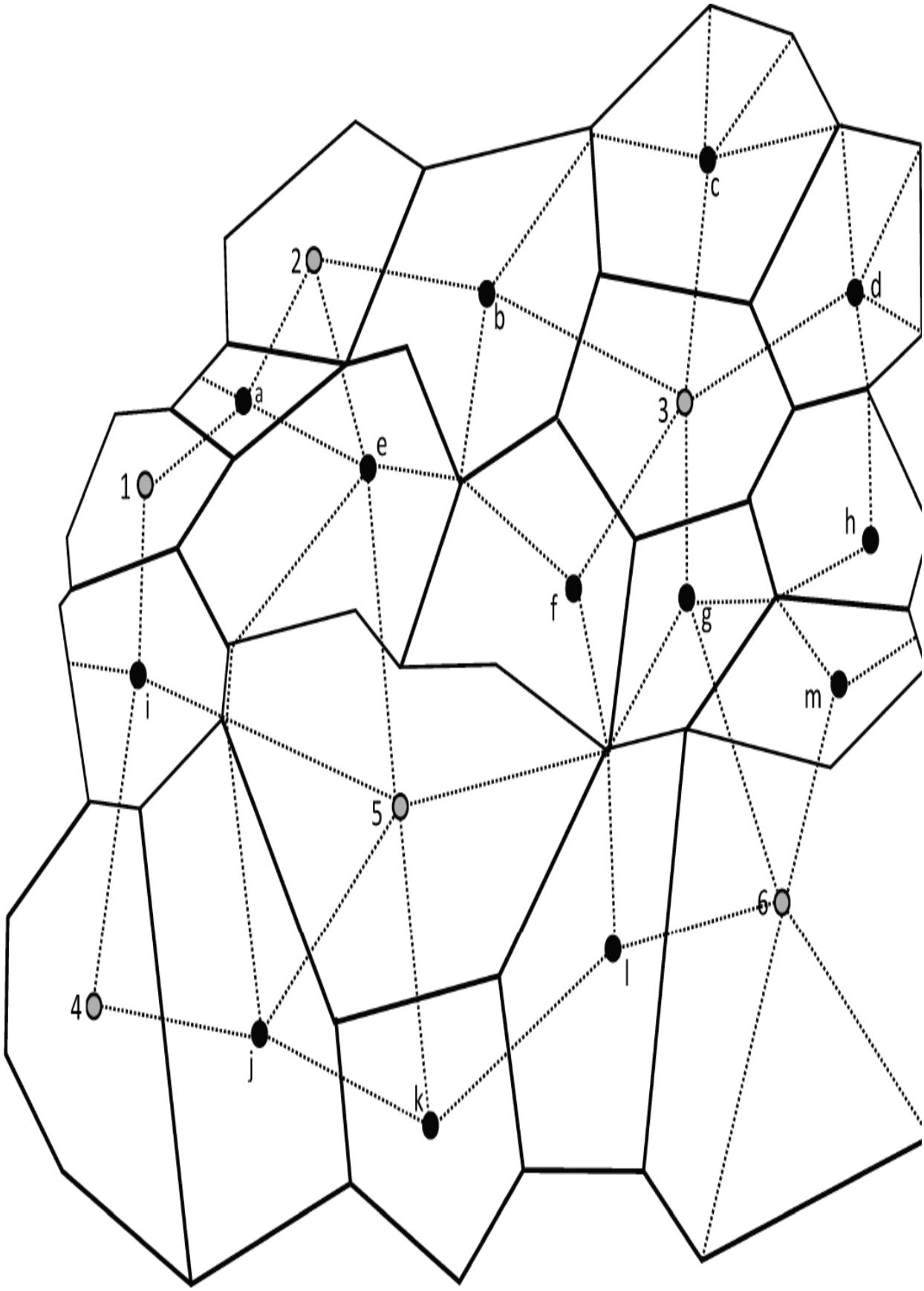

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Fig. 1.2: The spatial ordering of markets, here in an idealized form, shows issues of distance and of supply. This model highlights the relevance of maximal distances and minimal numbers of clients as limiting conditions for markets.

Even though the latter authors, Schwimmer and Plattner, limit these reflections to the spatial significance of local and rural markets, this limitation is only valid at first glance. In fact, these models are also highly applicable to global markets, as shown, for example, by Theodor Bestor (1999) using the example of the tuna fish market in Tokyo. In the case of this globally unique market, the costs of the travel to the market and of transportation are compensated for by the special quality of the goods. The organization of the provision of this highly sought-after product is so outstandingly good that for the wholesalers, who are active in this market, questions of distance become insignificant.

The contributions to this volume

Based on the priority given to the observable and 'documentable' aspects of the market as elaborated at the outset, this volume combines case studies from archaeological and anthropological research. Looking at the aspect of the market actors, along with the metaphors of the network and the commodity chain, as well as the spatial distribution models, covers only some of the many possible approaches to understanding the market. The aspects that have thus far been briefly outlined have shown strikingly how many different aspects there are and how wide the analytical potential is. As a result, a framework has in effect been set up, within which almost all the contributions included in this volume may be placed.

To this end, Lorenz Rahmstorf employs a phenomenological approach to show how, through an analysis of the spatial embedding of Bronze Age sites in central Europe, some sites may be identified as market places with some degree of certainty. Laura Picht describes access to the market using concrete, tangible material phenomena, namely the commodities she finds in the archaeological records. In her investigation, she is concerned in particular with the ceramic drinking vessels that were probably traded on the *agorai* of ancient Greece. In doing so, she investigates the idea that the increasing diversity in the forms of vessels is an expression of an increasing

number of imports and thus of a higher importance of trading activities. Lukas Wiggering also looks at commodities as part of long-distance trade. He examines the question as to whether these objects, which in his case are of bronze, were simply purchased and received or whether or not the acquisition in itself, as well as a change in craftsmanship alongside it, played a decisive role in the interest in such goods. Long-distance trade is also the topic of a study by Thomas Hahn. He examines the *terra sigillata* that were imported from northern Italy to central Europe to be purchased mainly by the legionaries stationed there.

Ute Scholz reports from a quite different epoch, namely the twelfth century AD. She investigates the medieval market of Tulln on the Danube. Compared to the other archaeological contributions (spaces and goods), she expands the range of phenomena under consideration by describing market stands and other sales equipment and is also able to make reference to the material culture of market activity.

Katherine Szabó's contribution is located at the interface between archaeology and anthropology. Some interpretations connect shells in Oceania which have been proved archaeologically to be over three thousand years old to the ethnographically well documented *Kula* exchange system as a form of long-distance trade. However, Szabó is critical of such parallels when they neglect the time depth. Szabo warns against any analogical conclusions and argues for a more cautious and at the same time more exact interpretation of very meticulously crafted shell jewellery.

Part two of the book is dedicated to the anthropological contributions, starting with a theoretically well informed survey article by Mahir Saul. Based on a meticulous analysis of the long history of markets in West Africa, he puts forward the hypothesis that markets that independently set pricing parameters existed alongside subsistence production for a considerable period of time. Unlike the capitalist model, these markets never reached all sectors of society, and, contrary to Polanyi's substantivist approach, the commodities traded in them were not subject to any direct state control. Integration into a uniform market-based economy simply did not take place.

Following on appropriately from this hypothesis, Ann Stahl deals with the question of the contribution that archaeological finds can make to

describing the social significance of markets in West Africa. Her hypothesis is that, in the history of West Africa, markets have had the function of providing interfaces and central social locations for a very long time.

Geraldine Schmitz's rather more microscopic focus is also situated in West Africa but based on current ethnographic observations. Her chapter describes the social and economic connections between markets within the area of her research in northern Ghana. Nishpriha Thakur adopts a radical phenomenological approach when describing the market of Surat. Pushing economic aspects rather into the background, the market as desribed by Thakur becomes a phenomenon of life-worlds and – to a more limited extend – of life-style.

Jessica Chelekis presents the results of her research in the central Amazon basin, where she studied the characteristics and problems of a global commodity chain. Despite a lack of profit, the middlemen and retailers continue with this business model because it is part of their professional identity.

As Hugo DeBlock makes clear on the basis of his ethnography of tourism on Vanuatu in the Pacific Ocean, markets are more than just simply places of economic exchange. He shows how, in the throes of the increasing commercialization of indigenous art, the positions of tradition and development within society are subject to re-negotiation. In same region – to be more exact, in New East Anglia – Keir Martin found similar problems: markets are arenas of mediation between local tradition and global market principles, whereby the question of opening up to the global market becomes a subject of controversy within the local population.

Conclusion

The implications of the term 'market' go beyond what can be expressed by the individual aspects mentioned here. Already at the outset of this introductory chapter it was indicated that the sub-division of meaning into specific levels is questionable. 'Market' is a key word that has influenced various debates and is often regarded as representing an autonomous, ineluctable position. This can also be put this way: the buzzword 'market' keeps on appearing again and again in astonishing contexts and under a

different guise. Market is a chameleon. It exists and manifests itself again and again in different forms, and colours and, as already elucidated, there is no discernible frontier regarding where the market space comes to an end. Transformability and the impossibility of drawing a boundary are valid for both the things and the people involved in market activities, as well as for the topics and structures, which are surprisingly linked to the term time and again.

It is almost impossible to connect this dimension of the term to the central concern of this book: the quality of being able to appear repeatedly under the guise of different colours like a chameleon contradicts the approach prioritized here of describing certain phenomena and cultural elements as the clearly recognizable elements of a market. These methods of access, which are consistently given a priority in the contributions, are not easy to reconcile with openness and indeterminability. These ideological aspects of the market have a 'salvatory power' (Cox 2016), which in the end renders any criticism of the market or any attempt to draw boundaries around it ineffective. In the light of a dominant ideology of the market, questions of content may be levered out and declared irrelevant, with the concepts of supply and demand being presented as new and supra-ordinated questions in their place.

The perception of the dominant and undelimitable principle of the 'market' has implicitly long since arrived in everyday language, as demonstrated by James Carrier (1997) in a sensitive analysis of the modern uses of words covering the scope of the term 'market'. It is thus clear to all speakers that, on closer inspection, a 'marriage market' is not in fact a market. In a similar way, the principle of 'free choice', while understood to be a core principle of market activity, is certainly not applicable in all areas of everyday live. Even though it may be impossible to establish the limits of the applicability of the market, it is obvious that in every society there is a desire not to allow markets to cover all aspects of life.

Although the 'market' has been at the centre of economic activities since Adam Smith, it has recently become less and less clear whether it can really be assigned the quality of being a progressive force in modern society, or whether it is not rather a questionable aspect of society, one characterized by

conflicts, aggression and antagonistic tendencies. The status of the market in society is less clear today than it used to be.

Carrier's reflections on the broadening of linguistic usage have a goal which is exactly not that shared by the present volume: his aim is to develop a 'cultural model' of the market, one which goes beyond empirical findings to place the discourse-relevant dimension at the centre. Rhetorically, Carrier follows up this plan by asking whether the market has not actually altogether become the mission statement of modern man.

This is surely not the case! Maybe it is a clever strategy to examine the market primarily in contexts in which the ideological supremacy outlined by Carrier is not yet evident. In this volume, with its references mainly to historically older and non-European examples, we may succeed, as Friedland and Robertson express it (1990: 9), in escaping from the modern, western field of gravity of the concept of the market and getting closer to a different concept that transcends such ideological distortions. In this manner, an alternative foundation could be developed which has as its point of departure in the precise phenomena which may be recorded. In this light, a strength of the concept advocated here is its non-subordination to the dominant discourse. By means of an off-route exploration of what is temporally and spatially distant, the aim of this volume is to develop a better understanding of the market's concrete observable and documentable effects.

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PART I

Archaeological approaches

Chapter 2

Of middens and markets: The phenomenology of the market place in the Bronze Age and beyond

Lorenz Rahmstorf

1. Introduction

With regard to the role of exchange in Bronze Age Europe, it has been argued that 'the use of the word "trade" is not very appropriate, since it implies an economic system in which markets or even money were in use' (Harding 2013: 370; for a critique, see Rahmstorf 2016). Instead, the interpretative framework for an understanding of the wide distribution of certain artefacts or materials is often sought in 'the result of successive cycles of gift exchange' (Cunliffe 2012: 282). Social models derived from other pre-modern societies are often considered very useful in acquiring an understanding of the mechanisms of the circulation of objects in European Bronze Age societies. For example, P. Wells noted recently that 'Malinowski's description of both the material and the social aspects of the Kula helps to remind us that in all pre-modern societies, we must take account of the social basis of goods circulation and not consider it in terms of the "economic" or "market-based" models of today' (Wells 2016: 173). Malinowski's description of the Melanesian *kula* indeed gives us a fascinating example of how exchange can be organized as a particular social phenomenon. Nevertheless, the social embeddedness of exchange is not only an aspect of pre-modern societies: various authors have emphasized that modern markets too are socially and politically embedded (van Bavel 2014: 149–150 with references). While rejecting the existence of market-based

economies in pre-modern times does not necessarily mean that the proponents of such views dismiss the existence of markets entirely in these periods, it certainly minimizes the role that market exchange might have played during this period.

In this article, I will therefore argue that because the potential presence of market places has not been taken into account for later prehistory the archaeological evidence for market places in the Bronze Age has not been understood and studied. This is partly due to prevailing preconceptions regarding the nature of exchange in the Bronze Age, similar to those mentioned above, which ignore the existence of market places in the variety of Bronze Age modes of exchange. It is, of course, because of the highly influential work of Karl Polanyi (1957) that scholars mainly treat exchange as involving *reciprocity* (gift exchange) and *redistribution* based on eastern, Egyptian and east Mediterranean temple and palace economies. Twenty years ago, Wilk (1998: 469) was already reminding us that 'perhaps because of the legacy of Polanyi … there has been a tendency to make too much of markets … or too little of them'. In fact, 'markets come in a variety of shapes and sizes, there is no single market principle, and markets can be integrated into a remarkable variety of economic systems'. Therefore, 'the next step should take us beyond the market/no-market polarity' (*ibid*.) simply because the presence of a market place does not necessarily mean that market principles existed in which the desire for profit governed the exchange and where prices were formed by supply and demand (Veenhof 1972: 351; Larsen 2015: 273).

In this article, I would therefore like to adopt a more empirical and less theoretical approach by investigating the evidence we have for market exchange in Bronze Age societies in Europe, the Mediterranean and Western Asia and ask how we can detect such exchange in the archaeological record. I will consider first the direct evidence for the existence of Bronze Age market places from written and pictorial sources (section 2). Using this comparative cross-cultural and diachronic perspective makes it possible to define specific general archaeological criteria for the presence of a market place (section 3). Turning to a specific example, it will be argued that the so-called midden sites of the Late Bronze Age and the transition to the Early

Iron Age in southern Britain can be regarded as to a certain extent as market places, despite generally being considered sites of competitive feasting (section 4). Finally, I shall argue that the archaeology of market places still requires much more unbiased study in the future (section 5).

2. Bronze Age sources for the market place

Our evidence for the existence of market places during the Bronze Age comes from three different sources: (1) textual evidence, mainly in the form of cuneiform tablets found in Turkey, Syria and Iraq, and to a far lesser extent in Ancient Egyptian texts; (2) depictions from Old and New Kingdom reliefs on Egyptian tombs; and (3) a few controversial archaeological cases. More potential archaeological data will be discussed in section 4.

a. Written sources

Words for 'market place' can be identified in Akkadian and Sumerian (AHW II: 583; Röllig 1976; Zaccagnini 1987–90; Biga 2003). Well known is the Akkadian *kāru(m)* describing in the first place the location of a place of exchange (literately meaning quay). Another significant Akkadian word, *mahīru(m)*, is usually translated as 'equivalent' or 'price', while the basic meaning of the associated Akkadian verb *mahāru* seems to be to 'approach somebody' (AHW II: 577; Lipiński 1997: 232), possibly a reference to face-to-face meetings during market exchange. When used in composition with *bābu* ('gate'), *bītu* ('house') and *rabū* ('great'), *mahīrum* is translated as 'market' (Wilcke 2009: 73). This Semitic root (*mhr*) is also found in Hebrew, in which the word *mehīr* is also translated as 'equivalent value' (Lipiński *ibid*.). In the Bible, markets are usually located at the gates of a city, as at Samaria (2 Kings 7: 1) – at least it is stated that one can buy flour there for a certain number of shekels. Beside *mahīru(m)* and *kāru(m)*, the word *sūqu(m)* seems to refer to market exchange as it emphasizes the location of places of exchange along a road within a city (Zaccagnini 1987–90: 422–3), and its connection with the Arabic word is obvious, even though considerable changes in its specific meaning may have occurred over time.

The 23,000 texts from Karum Kanesh in central Anatolia from the early second millennium BC depict a full commercial exchange system in which

‘the merchants bought low, sold high, looked for bargains, avoided what taxes they could, and assumed the risks for their ventures without any support from the palace on either end of the trade route’ (Sagona and Zimansky 2009: 231). Mainly from these texts, but also from other references from Nuzi, Assur and in a building inscription of Šamši-Adad I, we learn that market places were physical realities in Syro-Mesopotamian and Anatolian cities, for example, at Assur (‘We shall buy one heavy textile in the market’), Nuzi (‘On the market in Nuzi’), Karum Kanesh (‘Ennam-Assur and Buzazu grabbed each other in the market place’; ‘When A brought down a slave (!) from the market, B and C paid 12 minas of copper, the purchase price of the slave’) or an unidentified town or neighbourhood of Assur (‘On the market of Uramē’) (see Veenhof 1972: 353–5, 390–4; Larsen 2015: 273 for further references). At least two different markets could be present in such cities: a small market and a large one are mentioned in the texts from Nuzi (Zaccagnini 1987-90: 422). The existence of a market overseer or inspector is mentioned in Sumerian and Akkadian texts (Veenhof 1972: 394; Sallaberger 2008: 100–1), their function apparently being to keep order, prevent theft and make sure the properly approved weights were used. In Ancient Egypt state representatives controlled the exchange; they may be depicted in market scene reliefs (see below) as men walking with monkeys and baboons (Fig. 2.1, second row; Moussa and Altenmüller 1977: fig. 10; Hassan 1955: fig. 4) because one is described as a supervisor in the inscription. However, the possibility cannot be excluded that they simply wanted to sell these animals (Altenmüller 2001: 446–7). In sum, the written documentation indicates that the much later *agoranomoi* in the markets of the Classical and Hellenistic periods may have had a very similar function, namely to ensure ‘that buyers and sellers could make transactions without fear of violence or intimidation’ (Harris and Lewis 2015: 30).

In his fundamental study of 1972, K. R. Veenhof had already pointed out that ‘the *rationale* of the trade was the procuring of silver and gold, not for the city (or “state”), but for the merchants and firms, which, though perhaps checked and certainly taxed by the “state”, were rather exponents of private “capitalistic” enterprise’ (Veenhof 1972: 350). This trade was driven by the existence of different exchange rates for the goods that were in most

demand: whereas ‘in Aššur one could acquire ca. 15 shekels [ca. 125 g] of tin for 1 shekel [ca. 8.3–8.4 g] of silver … one could obtain 1 shekel of silver for ca. 7 shekels [ca. 58 g] of tin’ in Anatolia (*ibid*.). The rate of profit was therefore about 215%. And even though there were also considerable deductions due to the costs of the caravan trade from Aššur to Karum Kanesh, with taxes to be paid at both ends, the revenue still made this trade highly lucrative. Unfortunately, the textual evidence from Karum Kanesh is still often ignored by prehistorians. Larsen pointed out that, in the most widely used introduction to archaeology worldwide, *Archaeology: theories, methods and practice*, now in its seventh edition, the merchants of Kültepe are characterized as ‘acting as agents: that may be regarded as redistribution. But in some cases they do seem to have been trading on their own account, for personal gain’ (Renfrew and Bahn 2012: 354). As Larsen remarked, ‘this is turning everything upside down by converting the normal into an exception’ (Larsen 2015: 278), thus minimizing the role of markets in the Bronze Age. This example highlights the frequent preconceptions of researchers against the existence of markets during this period.

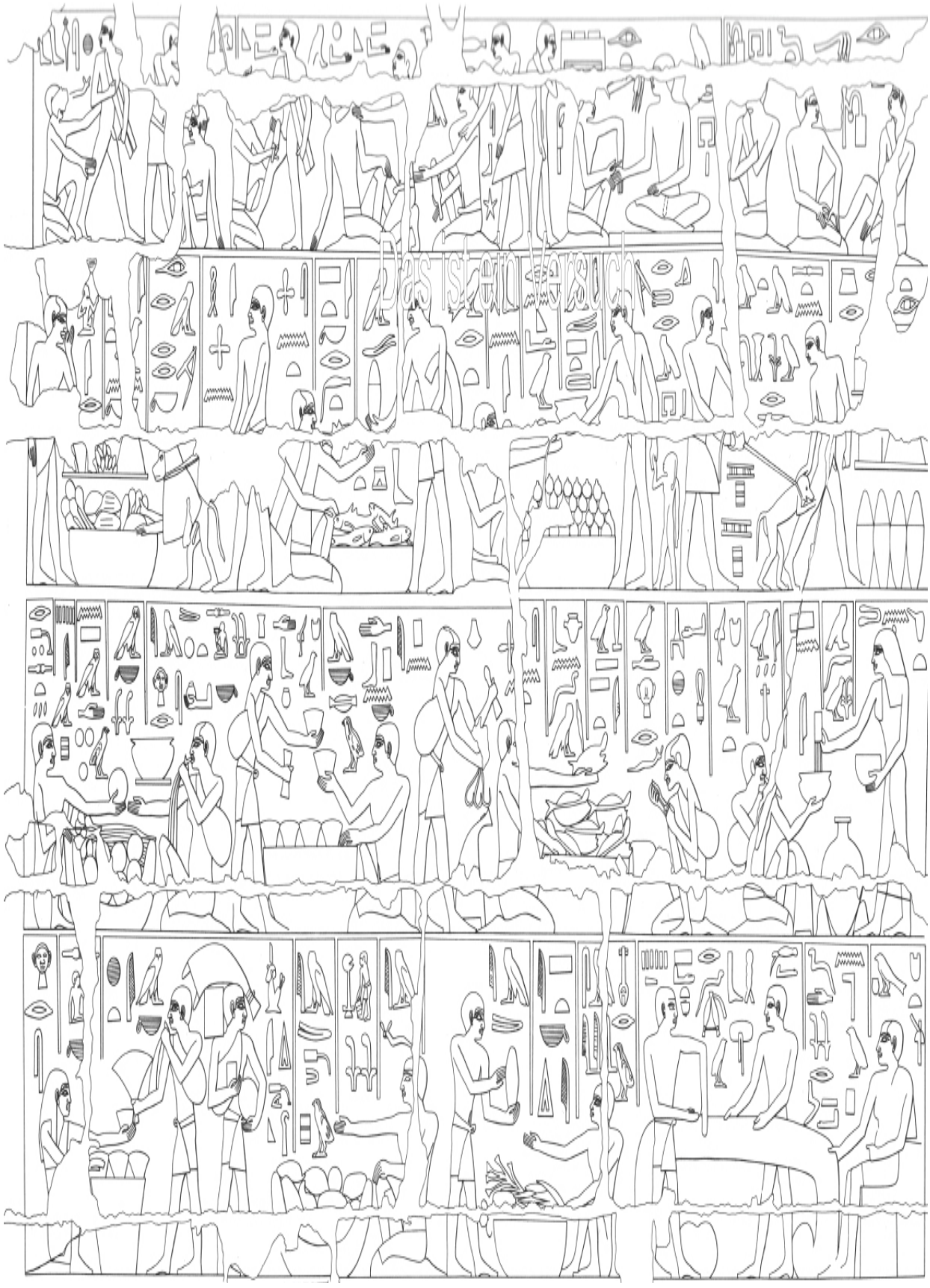


Fig. 2.1: Marketscene in the tomb-chapel of Nianchkhnum and Chnumhotep, Fifth Dynasty (ca. 25th century BC) at Saqqara, Egypt (Moussa and Altenmüller 1977: fig. 10).

b. Pictorial sources

The fact that there are depictions of market scenes from the Bronze Age is also not well known. These consist of reliefs on the walls of Ancient Egyptian tombs. The earliest depictions come from the Old Kingdom (Hodjash-Oleg and Berlev 1980: 31–32; Muhs 2016: 46–47, with further references) especially during the reigns of Pharaohs Niuserre, Unas and Teti (ca. 2450/2400–2300 BC), from the tomb-chapels of officials, as in the Mastabas of Djadjaemankh (Hodjash-Oleg and Berlev 1980) and Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep (Fig. 2.1; Moussa and Altenmüller 1977: 84–85, pl. 24; fig. 10) and the Unas causeway (Hassan 1938: pl. 96). More than a dozen have been preserved, though in several cases either only parts exist or the whole depiction has still not been published (Altenmüller 1980: 1191–1192; Hodjash-Oleg and Berlev 1980). Only one unpublished market scene is known from the First Intermediate period, and none from the Middle Kingdom (Altenmüller 1980: 1192; Zingarelli 2010: 37). There are at least five market scenes from New Kingdom tombs (Altenmüller 1980, 1992, with further references), and some authors argue that there are potentially more depictions than this (Zingarelli 2010: 44). All in all, we know of about twenty market scenes from Egypt in the third and second millennia BC.

Market scenes generally show sellers and buyers. Usually the sellers are squatting on the ground or sitting on a low chair in front of a basket filled with their products, and the seller is standing in front of them, but sometimes they both stand. No architecture, not even any stalls, are shown in the scenes, but sometimes sunshades are depicted (Fischer 1972), especially for those from the New Kingdom. Inscriptions next to the depictions show them in lively dialogues. For example, in the tomb of Anchmahor (around 2300 BC) the seller offers his dried fish as follows: ‘See these’, and the customer responds ‘Excellent’ (Badawy 1978: 20, fig. 31, pl. 34, right). The goods are exchanged through barter, the most common being food, especially fish and vegetables, but tools (e.g. angler’s hooks, fans) and other objects of daily use

(e.g. sandals, caskets) were also exchanged for foodstuffs (e.g. barley), tools (e.g. spindle) or jewellery (e.g. beads) (Hodjash and Berlev 1980: 47; Livingstone-Thomas 2011). It is interesting to note that certain simple commodities, like shoes, mats and baskets, are never mentioned in distribution lists in the official 'state' documents in Mesopotamia, where instead people had to exchange them in markets (Steinkellller 1996: 253). The inscriptions on the Egyptian tombs imply that the equivalences of value between the different commodities seem to have been generally well acknowledged by all members of society, though all the goods exchanged in these market scenes are of rather low material value. However, there is one exception, depicted in the lowest register on the right side of the tomb of Chnumhotep and Nianchchnum at Sakkara (Fig. 2.1, bottom right; Moussa and Altenmüller 1977: 84–85, fig. 10 [Scene 11.4.4]; Harpur and Scremin 2010: pl. 67, context photograph 587 [top right]; context drawing 71). In this case a certain amount of cloth is being exchanged for six *š ṯ* (*shati*). Precious cloth was the 'material most commonly given in high value Old Kingdom exchanges' (Muhs 2016: 38). The problem is still what was meant by *shati*: was it a measure of value in a metal which itself was actually usually exchanged, or else never exchanged, used as an abstract currency (*ibid.*: 37 with further references)? At least since the Middle Kingdom, a *shati* was a twelfth of a *deben*, a unit of weight. Hence, mentioning *shati* in connection with at least one sale depicted in the market scenes underlines two important issues: first, in rare cases highly valuable commodities were also exchanged in markets; and secondly, the value of these commodities was expressed in units of weight. The connection with the practice of weighing is further underlined in market scenes from the New Kingdom. In Kenamun's tomb, two stalls with persons offering and weighing out goods are depicted next to market places and mooring sites for ships on the river bank. While markets are generally described as local (Altenmüller 2001: 447; Zingarelli 2010: 35; Muhs 2016: 86), considerable distances had to be overcome to reach markets, at least in some cases. In the Middle Kingdom literary text 'The Eloquent Peasant', which is set earlier, during the First Intermediate Period, a peasant takes his products on a donkey about 200 km from Wadi Natrun to Herakleopolis (Neninesu) to exchange them for barley before being robbed

of his possessions. Even though it is not explicitly stated, he seems to have intended to exchange them in a market place for food for his family. J. Renger suggested, with reference to the Mesopotamian context, that 'villagers would come individually to towns and cities as the natural central place to obtain objects and goods made by persons with special skills. As for goods which came over long distances, a central location would also be the obvious place for obtaining them' (Renger 1984: 72). Judging from the Egyptian depictions from the Late Kingdom, it is apparent that markets were located at harbors, river banks and mooring sites, as in the case of reliefs in the tombs of Kenamun (Davies and Faulkner 1947: pl. viii), Chaemhet (Pino 2005; Zingarelli 2010: fig. 6 a–b) and Ipui (Zingarelli 2010: fig. 3 a–b). These locations and the presence of ships validates the suggestion that the market had not only local but also regional and interregional importance in exchanges of goods. This is also supported by the fact that the Ancient Egyptian word *mrj.t* (bank) is also translated as 'market' (Römer 1992: 259), an interesting parallel to the Akkadian *karū*, which also means quay or embankment. In addition, the markets are situated at road junctions (Altenmüller 1980: 1193).

c. Archaeological sources

In this section, I will briefly describe possible sites of exchange from Neolithic Europe and then turn to potential market places which have been proposed in the archaeological literature for the Bronze and Early Iron Age Near East and (rarely) for Europe. So far, the actual location of markets is often only suggested by the existence of large open spaces within a settlement area and other potential indicators, like paving. Often authors are fully aware of potential hypotheses (e.g. Larsen 2015: 36), but sometimes a large open 'public' space alone is enough to enable an author to speak of the 'earliest known marketplace' (Kolb 1984: 53), for example, that linked to the 'town court' (Cadogan 1992: fig. 13.3–4) in Late Bronze Age Gournia on Crete. And indeed, an open space is probably the most important element of a market, one that must be considered indispensable to the classical-ancient, occidental and oriental city (Wirth 2000: 403), though they could also have been located along streets (cf. in Akkadian: *sūq šīmātim*,'streets of the

merchandise'; Zaccagnini 1987–90: 422). In general, the archaeological context has seldom been examined due to the methodological problems involved in identifying market places and preconceptions regarding how the trade was organized stemming from simply ignoring the possibility that market places played any role in exchange.

One of the earliest examples of open spaces that have been also discussed as potential market places may be the large causewayed enclosure sites of the Neolithic in Europe. While causewayed enclosures with specific characteristics are known from different periods of the Neolithic in temperate Europe, they are especially known from the late fifth and fourth millennia BC in western, central and northern Europe, for example, in the Michelsberger culture in central Europe, the Funnel Beaker culture in northern-central Europe and the Windmill Hill culture in Britain (Andersen 2014; Geschwinde and Raetzel-Fabian 2006). F. Oelmann may have been the first to suggest a functional interpretation for these sites as market places in 1923 (Oelmann 1923: 96–7; cf. Andersen 1997: 304). Arguments that have been put forward in favour of this hypothesis include their locations at important geographical sites (e.g. river crossings) and the presence of imported materials. In recent years various authors have indeed emphasized their association with supra-regional historically known road systems (Klassen 2014; Meyer and Raetzel-Fabian 2015: 28), visible, for example, from the fact that they are located along the axis of later Roman roads (Schyle *et al.* 2015: 363). In Denmark, causewayed enclosures are restricted to the coastal zone, which 'might have had to do with the long-distance routes to which they related' (Klassen 2014: 254). In older theories these enclosures, with their impressive ditch systems, were regarded as fortified sites or refuges. The main objections against such an understanding is the fact that the ditches are most often not continuous but have very many untouched blocks of soil in between them. In addition, they are often much too big to have been easily defended during the Neolithic period, and the banks were much too low for this, perhaps never even intended to be such, as 'the soil dug out of the ditches usually lay in heaps along the sides of the ditches' (Andersen 1997: 303). It has also been suggested that the large number of passageways in the enclosures is due to their use as corrals for

animals (e.g. Rest 1940; Piggott 1954: 29; Toupet 1988). Cattle bones are common finds in the ditches of the enclosures. This idea has recently been revived, namely that the enclosures were erected in order to handle large herds of cattle during transhumance, during which the whole population would also be brought together for social and religious activities (Geschwinde and Raetzel-Fabian 2006). Their many openings would be an advantage in this regard (Jeunesse and Seidel 2010: 67). However, many of the enclosures are on top of or on the slopes of hills, which would not be very practical as corrals. Finds of human skeletons, often just body parts, deposits of animal bones (e.g. cattle horns) and artefacts (axes, pottery) and indications of the use of fire suggest that some kind of ritual practice took place in the enclosures. With some plausibility, they have been interpreted as places for communal feasting. Ethnographic data points to the fact that societies without inherited hierarchies only generate large labour effort for communal feasts (Kerig and Knoche 2015: 147). Seasonal feasts and rituals performed in these enclosures would have intensified social cohesion in the community (Knoche and Schyle 2015: 371). In sum, it is likely that the causewayed enclosures were used for a variety of reasons, one of them, and probably the most important, being to hold community gatherings and religious feasts. Alongside these events, exchanges of goods, including moving cattle herds, may have taken place for reasons of both transhumance and exchange. Therefore, the assumed functional range of these later Neolithic enclosures is in this respect similar to market places and fairs from the Bronze Age to the modern period, as we shall see below.

Discussions of the locations of potential market places and their archaeological detection are rare for the Ancient Near East and Egypt, actual archaeological evidence for them having been described as ‘extremely scanty’ (Zaccagnini 1987–90: 421). A. Otto suggested that a large open area (*c*. 30 × 60 m) in the middle of the western city (‘Weststadt’) of Tell Bazi was a market place. Her arguments in favour of this interpretation are the presence of thin, indifferently built walls. Small rooms are all that can be reconstructed. In other cases these walls seem rather to be the remains of partition walls or foundations for racks. The open area is easily accessible from the built areas from the main roads. The remaining city area has no

further open areas, except for those which are clearly related to specific houses. In the compound only a few vessels, some weights, fragments of bronze objects, small terracotta figurines and animal bones were excavated. Otto suggests that the rather low number of finds is due to the sloping terrain, on which deluges of water run down after heavy rain (Otto 2006: 266–267). Nevertheless, such archaeologically observed market places are rare, according to Otto because they are located beyond the settlements, as is still typical of Mesopotamia today (*ibid*.: 267, and n. 472). The supposed market place at the Late Bronze Age site of Tell Bazi may also have once been *extra muros* and became incorporated into the settlement only later, after the latter's expansion. One can agree with Otto that assumed locations of market places outside cities or in free compounds between different parts of a city may explain the lack of archaeological evidence, at least to a certain extent. In the Old Babylonian Period, the Paternoster Row in ancient Ur (Woolley and Mallowan 1976: 32) may have functioned as a 'street of the merchandise'. Nos 5, 7, 9 and 14 Paternoster Row consist of deep rectangular, subdivided buildings with a narrow frontage on to the street. The street's general resemblance to the souks of recent times, with their narrow streets and houses opening on to the lane, surely influenced this particular interpretation. In the Second City (*c*. 2550–2200 BC) at Mari in Syria, a triangular quarter reflecting the street layout is situated in the western part of the city close to the temple of Ishtar. The open space (*c*. 10 × 15 m) is surrounded by pillars forming a kind of portico. The buildings at the back have been interpreted as shops, and the whole architectural arrangement as 'a market for the neighbourhood' (Fig. 2.2; Margueron 2014: 54, 57, fig. 55). In both Ur and Mari, detailed documentation of all the finds (artefacts and ecofacts) has either not been carried out or has been lost since. For example, it is not possible to relocate most of the 460 weights excavated by Woolley in Ur between 1922 and 1934 (Hafford 2012: 24) in order to determine whether they were found (more often?) in the designated areas. However, a recent interesting example from Ashkelon in Israel is better documented. An Iron Age market area has been excavated in Grid 50 at the site directly on the southern Levantine coast. The city, including the market area, was destroyed by Nebuchadrezzar's army in 604 BC. There four

buildings were excavated which ‘were separated by streets in which were found artifacts and installations that gave evidence of a thriving commercial district’ (Stager *et al*. 2011: 34). The strong concentrations of storage vessels, weights and scale pans (especially in West and South Street; see *ibid*.: 734: fig. 27.34) clearly indicate commercial activities. The site may have been a market place or a transhipment point directly on the coast.

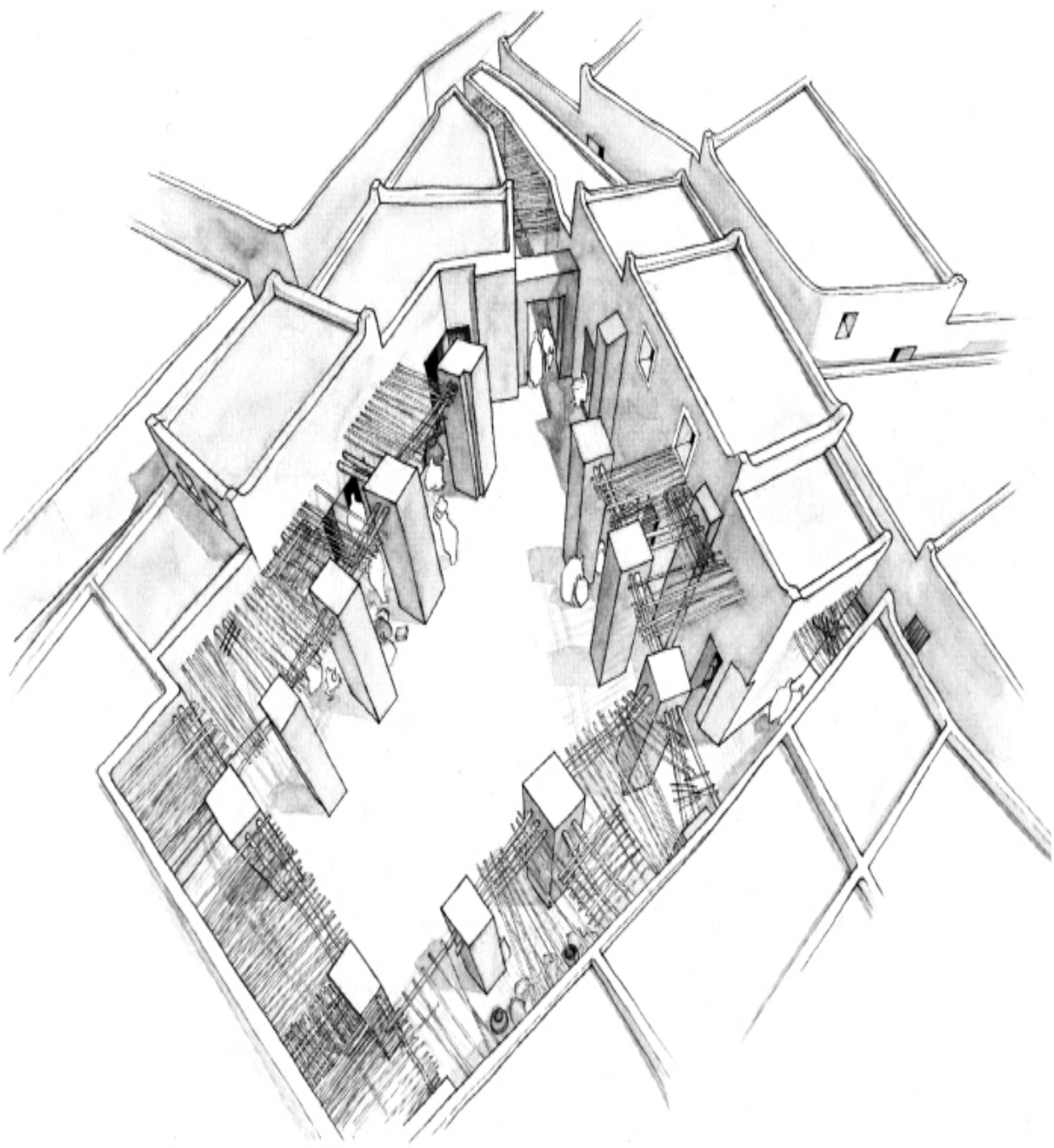


Fig. 2.2: Reconstructed bird's-eye view of a possible 'Souk'/market place in the western part of City II (c. 2550–2200 BC) at Mari, Syria (Margueron 2014: fig. 55).

To my knowledge there is no detailed discussion of archaeological data hinting at the presence of a market place in Bronze Age Europe (but cf. the case study below). The presence of such markets has sometimes been suggested for Early Iron Age (Hallstatt period) sites in south-central Europe

(Rahmstorf 2016: 294 with further references). Recently, this has been especially proposed for north German Iron Age sites during the pre-Roman and Imperial periods (e.g. Willroth 2002: 207; Aufderhaar 2016: 260, 'Lande- und Umschlagsplätze'), both at the mouths of rivers and in the immediate coastal zone, like at Elsfleth-Hopenkamp (Mückenberger 2013; Schlothfeldt 2016). In Lower Saxony estuarine river systems of the Weser and Ems are currently studied in their role as infrastructure for traffic, exchange and trade. Concentrations of foreign artefacts at certain places, especially at confluvial areas, may indicate market places (Siegmüller 2013).

3. Detecting market places: Cross-cultural and diachronic indicators

Various methodological approaches have been proposed in the last 20 years or so in American archaeology to detect market exchange, especially by K. Hirth, being defined as contextual, spatial, configurational, distributional and regional production-distribution approaches (Hirth 1998; 2009; Feinman and Garraty 2010: 176–177). It is not possible to go into a detailed discussion of these approaches here, but it has been pointed out that they partially 'suffer from the problem of equifinality: it is rarely, if ever, possible to rule out alternate exchange mechanisms for observed archaeological patterns' (*ibid*.: 178; also Stahl, this volume). The 'configurational approach' 'seeks to detect physical evidence of marketplaces' (*ibid*.: 177). This approach, when used in adopting a cross-cultural and diachronic perspective, is the most rewarding in my understanding.

a. Market places as large open areas

Market places as large open areas where men sit on the ground or on low chairs in front of baskets is a trivial characteristic feature. It is found cross-culturally as a phenomenon in the market scenes mentioned above from ancient Egypt, in depictions from sixteenth-century AD Mesoamerica (Hirth 2012: fig. 47.1), in oil paintings from Early Modern period central Europe (e.g. those of Jan Breughel the Elder, *Great Fish-Market*, 1603, Alte Pinakothek, Munich and Joachim Beuckelaer, *Ecce Homo in a Marketplace*, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum). In this respect, their non-specific settings make

it hard to define any particular type of location. For example, during the Late and most likely also the Classical Mayan periods in eastern Mexico, Guatemala and Belize, 'markets may have simply occurred on whatever open plaza space was available and, in most cases, were not formally designated or architecturally designed by the ruling classes'. In addition, there are no separate words in Mayan for 'market' or 'plaza', which implies a deeply entrenched semantic affinity (Speal 2014: 92).

b. Massive cultural layers

Thick layers containing human cultural debris are usually encountered in market places. Whereas today, for example, the debris of weekly markets in German city centres is immediately taken away by public street-cleaning services after the market has closed in the afternoon, this was not the case in ancient times. The result was a constant increase in cultural debris on the ground, mainly organic refuse (vegetables, fruit, bones with remains of meat, parts of fish, etc.), containers made of ceramic, bast, wood, etc., but also artefacts like tools broken accidentally or with imperfections and half-finished artefacts that were also produced on the site (see below). Whether such components are still traceable hundreds or thousands of years later depends on the soil, but examples from Mesoamerica (e.g. Dahlin *et al.* 2010) or the later Medieval period in central Europe (e.g. Küchelmann 2014: 'mit Knochen gepflastert/paved with bones') demonstrate the extensive accumulation of such debris in market places. The cultural layers are traceable in favorable circumstances. The organic material changes the pH content of the soil as well as increasing the presence of certain trace elements there, especially of phosphates (Dahlin *et al*. 2010). Due to the presence of large numbers of humans and animals, the soil can be expected to be highly condensed, unless there is a stone platform over it.

c. Limited amount of architectural features

Because of all the open space, there are usually only a few built features in market places, if any at all. Typically there are no traces of permanent dwellings in market areas, but only lightly built stalls, booths and fences, as, for example, at Early Medieval Tissø, Zealand, in Denmark (Jørgensen

2004: 201). Also tables and benches occur, suggesting an area with postholes 1× 0.9–2 m in size in the thirteenth-century market area at Tulln in Austria (Scholz 2016: 57–58: fig. 8; also Scholz, this volume). The postholes of the sunshades in the Ancient Egyptian depictions (Fischer 1972) mentioned above would not have left many archaeological traces in the ground, though they were also used for hanging commodities (Davies and Faulkner 1947: pl. 8; Zingarelli 2010: fig. 4 a–b). Lightly built stalls are also sometimes depicted in the Late Medieval and Early Modern periods in central Europe, the oil painting of a *Lakenmarkt* (cloth market) in s'Hertogenbosch, Netherlands, from around AD 1530 (Nagel-Schlicksbier 2006: fig. 15).

d. Markets as production sites

It has often been observed that market places are not only places of exchange but also of production. For example, Late Medieval market areas often contain large numbers of kilns (Scholz 2013: 145–151). The so-called 'productive sites' from the seventh to ninth centuries AD in Early Medieval northern Europe are at the same time market places (Pestell and Ulmschneider 2003). Obsidian blade production was a common feature in Mesoamerican markets (Hirth 2009: 99). For the Bronze Age this aspect is not yet so clearly visible (but see below), but this may just reflect our very limited knowledge of the archaeology of actual market places from this period.

e. Weights and scales as typical finds

In cuneiform texts, 'weighing stones of the market place' are specifically mentioned (Zaccagnini 1987–90: 422). Weighing equipment is a typical archaeological find in market places, despite normally appearing only in low numbers. Small weights may have been lost by accident or been broken, and worn weights may have been thrown away. Several weights were found at the supposed market place in the western city of Tell Bazi in Syria dated to the Late Bronze Age (Otto 2006: 267). Broken scales may have had the same destiny. Hence it is no surprise to find parts of balance beams in Late Medieval market places, as in Bremen (Bischop 2006: 226, fig. 12, 8) and Magdeburg (Nickel 1964: 45, 139, pl. 64, o) in Germany, or Tulln in Austria

(Scholz, this volume). In some cases the number of weights found in market areas is very high, as at Tissø, Zealand, in Denmark (Jørgensen 2003: fig. 203, 15.24), but coins may have been mapped here as well.

f. Markets next to places of worship and sanctuaries

It has often been emphasized that there is a 'customary location of ancient markets near places of worship' (Agnew 1979: 103). This nexus is already visible in the early examples from the Ancient Near East: 'Fairs (in which weights were used) took place in the sanctuaries or close to the sanctuaries' (Biga 2006: 342). In Classical Greece, sanctuaries and market places were planned and altered as whole closed complexes (Borbein 1973: 104, n. 310). From Medieval times to the present day, fairs and markets were not only parts of a network of exchange structures serving for exchanges of goods, but were also the reason for feasts being held in public spaces (Scholz 2014: 69). The presence of a holy precinct was a necessary requirement enabling humans unknown to each other to interact in exchange without fearing for their lives and possessions. As M. E. Aubet has put it:

> The sanctuaries in antiquity were the prime places of commercial transactions in a foreign country. The first condition of any market or trading colony set up on a frontier or in a distant land was to ensure that its visitors were not molested or robbed. And, as a general rule, that security was offered by a god, under whose auspices and protection deals were verified. The name of the god was invoked in oaths sanctioning contracts. (Aubet 2001: 277)

In sum, from a cross-cultural and diachronic perspective, various archaeological indicators may suggest the presence of a market place. These comprise a small number of rather simply built structures, large amounts of fragmented artefacts, thick organic but trampled levels, large assemblages of bones, evidence for production on site, finds of weighing equipment and signs of cultic practice. In the following case study, it will be argued that specific sites from the Late Bronze Age and the transitional phase to the Iron Age in southern Britain should be understood also as market places.

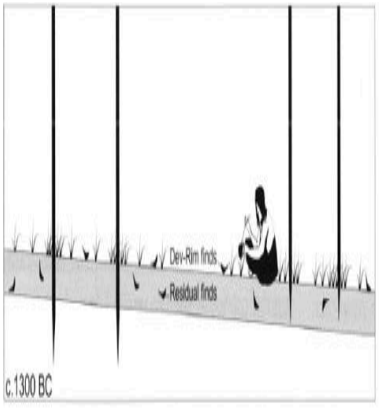
4. A case study: Midden sites in Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age Britain

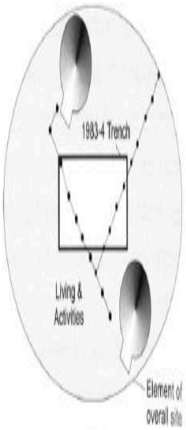
The term 'midden' is used 'to describe any kind of occupation feature containing large quantities of refuse' (Waddington 2012: 41). The so-called middens of the Late Bronze Age and the transition to the Early Iron Age, which date mainly from the ninth and eighth centuries BC, are known from roughly 30 such sites (*ibid*.: 42) in southern Britain and on islands in the English Channel, like Mez-Notariou on the island of Ouessant off the western coast of Brittany (see Le Bihan and Villard 2001; Webley 2015). They comprise thick midden deposits consisting of large numbers of finds and especially large quantities of bone fragments, for example, at Potterne (Locker 2000) and East Chisenbury in Wiltshire. While only 1% of the midden at Potterne (*c*. 3.5 ha) has been excavated, 130,000 animal bones and a ton of pottery have been recovered (Lawson 2000: ix). Due to the massive presence of live animals, the dark humic layers at these sites, as at Llanmaes in southern Wales, are thought to have been formed by slurry (Gwilt *et al*. 2006). However, metal and bone artefacts have also been recovered in great numbers, and human bones in more limited numbers. The accumulations are impressive: at Potterne they are about 2 m thick, but might originally have been 5 m thick (Lawson *et al*. 2000: 269). It has been remarked that 'the monumental scale of deposition is unparalleled in a British prehistoric context' (Madgwick and Mulville 2015: 630), especially when compared to average settlement sites of this period. The sites are often placed on hilltops or hill slopes near to waterways, route ways (Waddington 2012: 42, 52) and river confluences, so that the 'communication network benefitted from river transportation as much as possible even' (Needham and Spence 1996: 246, on the case of Runnymede Bridge), though the elsewhere the first-named author suggested that 'the nodality was not in terms of some kind of mercantile economic system' (Needham 1991: 383), a point to which I shall return below. In sum, it appears that the middens were most often placed in well-chosen locations 'at the junctures of different perceived environments' (Waddington 2012: 42).

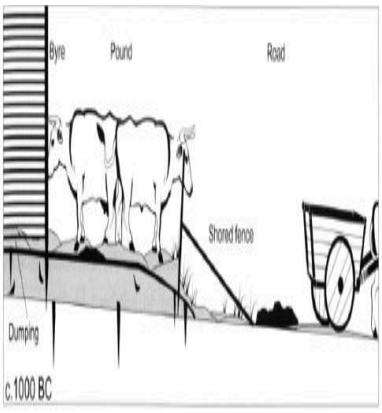
Also fascinating are the data obtained from animal bones. The animals' cull patterns indicate that most were butchered in spring and summer

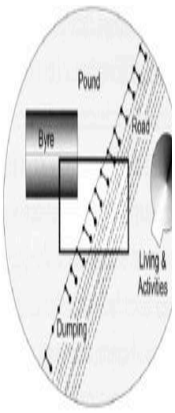
(Locker 2000: fig. 38). Trampling by large numbers of animals occurred at various middens, and even though the taphonomic processes are difficult to decode in detail (Madgwick 2015), the accumulations were apparently created in a short period of time. Recent isotope results have revealed further interesting results. Carbon and nitrogen isotope analyses of the bones can be used to reconstruct the animals' diets, showing for pigs especially that they were not raised by specialist producers but in different areas using a variety of resources (Madgwick and Mulville 2015: 635, fig. 5). This could be interpreted as many humans coming to the middens with their own animals, which had been raised in different ways. In addition, strontium-isotope analyses of six pigs demonstrate that four of them were not local but were raised a considerable distance away (>20 km). The butchery practices (the presence of a large number of skull fragments) and the slurry deposits mentioned previously indicate that the animals had been brought alive to the middens (*ibid*.: 636–637). The authors conclude that 'isotope results provide convincing evidence that people were converging on Llanmaes, bring their locally raised animals with them' (*ibid*.: 641). Exceptionally large in the pig bone sample are the right fore-limbs with a much larger percentage (68.5%) of the number of identified specimens of pig limb bones (including scapulae and pelves) than the left fore-limbs (17.9%), the right hind-limbs (6.9%) and the left hind-limbs (6.7%). This evidence indicates 'highly formalised, socially circumscribed practices relating to the selection, processing and deposition of animals at Llanmaes' (*ibid*.: 634). For this reason, Madgwick and Mulville interpret the midden deposits as the result of sacrificed offerings. There is very little evidence that larger buildings were constructed on these sites, the lack of reconstructable round houses or huts placing them in sharp contrast to settlement sites. However, there are pits, hearths, kilns and rows of small postholes (e.g. at Potterne: Lawson 2000: 25–37). The kilns, crucibles, waste, etc. indicate the production of pottery and metal artefacts at these sites. Excavations at the middens have brought artefacts of great material value to light, as suggested by their rarity or the foreignness of the material, like a gold bracelet (*ibid.*: 9: 185–187, fig. 67), amber beads (Longley 1980: fig. 18, 69–70; Needham and Spence 1996: 188, fig. 101, AM1–AM2; Healy 2000: fig. 86), high magnesium glass beads (Henderson

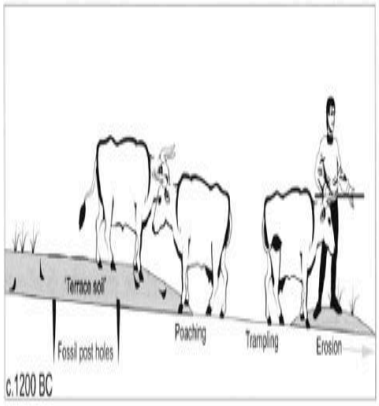
2000; Boyle and Henderson 2006: fig. 3.3, pl. 3.2; Ladle and Morgan 2012: 5, image 19) and an Egyptian blue bead (Needham and Bimson 1988: fig. 2).

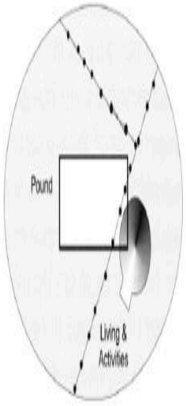

Dev-Rim finds
Residual finds
c.1300 BC


1983-4 Trench
Living & Activities
Element of overall site

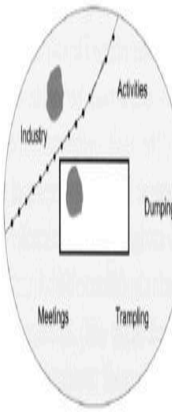

Byre
Pound
Road
Shored fence
Dumping
c.1000 BC

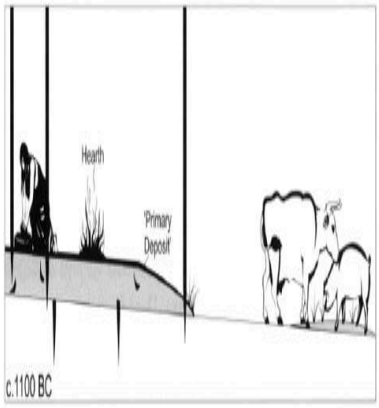

Pound
Byre
Road
Living & Activities
Dumping

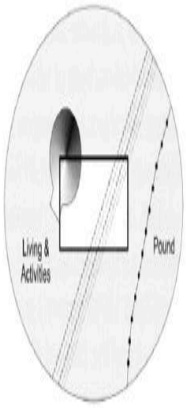

'Terrace soil'
Fossil post holes
Poaching
Trampling
Erosion
c.1200 BC


Pound
Living & Activities

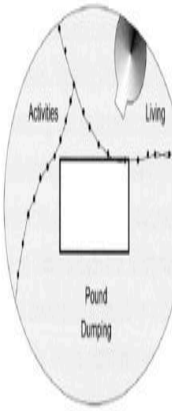

c.900 BC

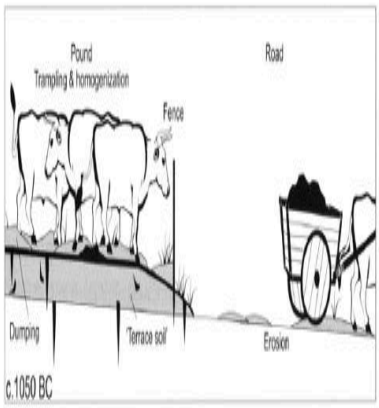

Activities
Industry
Dumping
Meetings
Trampling

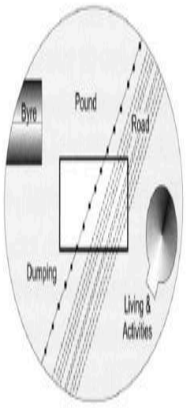

Hearth
'Primary Deposit'
c.1100 BC

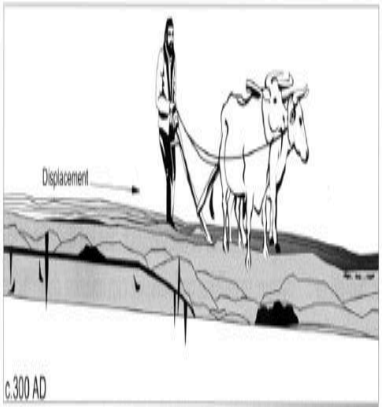

Living & Activities
Pound


The Deposit
c.800 BC


Activities
Living
Pound
Dumping


Pound
Trampling & homogenization
Fence
Road
Dumping
'Terrace soil'
Erosion
c.1050 BC


Byre
Pound
Road
Dumping
Living & Activities


Displacement
c.300 AD

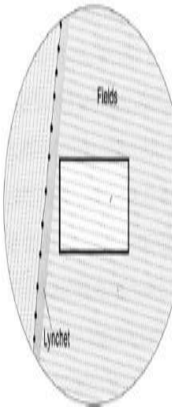

Fields
Lynchet

Fig. 2.3: Schematic interpretation of the stages in the development of the midden site of Potterne between c. 1300–800 BC and around AD 300, southern England, according to the excavator (Lawson 2000: fig. 100a–b).

Complicated reconstructions of site histories have been proposed, with phases of living in houses, herding and fencing animals, working and producing pottery and other artefacts, and dumping on the site (Fig. 2.3; Lawson 2000: 257–261: fig. 100a–b; Needham and Spence 1997: 242–8, fig. 109). In general, the midden sites and their deposits have received a wide range of interpretations: as ceremonial centres, as places of feasting, especially of large-scale competitive feasts (e.g. McOmish 1996; Madgwick and Mulville 2015: 641), as elite centres (Brück 2007: 34), as seasonal community gathering places (e.g. Needham 1991; Brück 2007: 34) or as places associated with fertility, life cycles and excess (e.g. Parker Pearson 1996; Needham and Spence 1997: 85) or a combination of several or all these. The possibility that they are just 'particularly messy farmsteads' (Barrett and McOmish n.d.: 13 – with a question mark) can be excluded. Suggestions that these sites were market places or fairs have surfaced in the archaeological literature only infrequently and only in passing (e.g. Lawson 2000: 270; Bradley 2007: 233; Bradley *et al.* 2016: 240). Considering the indicators we have collated above, it would make good sense to explain these sites in southern Britain and the islands of the English Channel (Bradley *et al.* 2015: 240) as seasonal community gathering places and places of feasting but also as sites of exchange, indeed as market places. The interpretation of them as places of regular, seasonal exchange is also implied by a find category which is especially used in exchange and trade, namely weighing equipment. So far, the presence of such tools at midden sites and their implications have not been understood.

At the two middens for which publications are most complete, namely those at Potterne in Wiltshire (Lawson 1980) and Runnymede Bridge in Surrey (Longley 1980; Needham 1992; Needham and Spence 1996), we also know of weights and scales. At Potterne the find of a bone balance beam was described as a 'possible antler frag.; bobbin-like form; transverse perforations at both ends and in the centre; polished on all surfaces' and as a 'very delicate possible balance arm' (Seager Smith 2000: 234, 240, figs 97 and 98), but it was not discussed any further in this publication. The lead

block object from Runnymede (Needham and Hook 1988: 260, fig. 2) has so far not been interpreted as a balance weight, but parallels in copper alloy or bronze from Britain (Needham *et al*. 2013: 89, fig. 3.21, S27) and especially central Europe (e.g. Pare 1999: fig. 10, 2; 16, 2–4) make this plausible.

The so far limited number of possible weights from the Late Bronze Age and the transition to the Iron Age may partly be explained by the difficulty of physically recognizing lead objects, rather than passing them off as dull-coloured stones (Needham and Hook 1988: 265; Schuster 2014: 182). Other significant factors here are the generally low visibility of weights (Needham 2017: 37) in the archaeological record (the lack of deposited weighing equipment because the mortuary evidence is largely lacking in Middle and Late Bronze Age Britain in contrast to central Europe) and possible stone weights being interpreted as peculiar pebble shapes (cf. Rahmstorf 2014), all the sorts of finds that need to be preserved and published on by archaeologists. The appearance of weighing equipment at the two midden sites which have the most extensive publications puts a strong emphasis on their function as places of exchange. The undeniable connections of the middens with cultic behaviour and feasting and as production sites do not contradict such an interpretation. Market places were mostly connected to or formed part of places of worship, as we have seen in discussing the cross-cultural and diachronic perspective in relation to markets.

5. Conclusions

Market places have rarely been taken into account when discussing exchange during the Bronze Age. This applies even to the Near East and Egypt, with their direct written and pictorial evidence for market places. For Bronze Age Europe, the existence of market places tends to be denied generally because their presence would imply the existence of trade with a professional class of traders, money, weights and scales and common systems of material value (e.g. Harding 2013: 370). None of these phenomena have been well researched for Bronze Age Europe as yet, despite indications of their existence (cf. Rahmstorf 2016), and it would be wrong to exclude their presence during this period just because of theoretical biases. This chapter has suggested that specific sites from the Late Bronze Age and

the transition to the Iron Age in southern Britain and some islands in the English Channel (the middens) could have functioned also as market places. This does not necessarily mean that this was their primary function, but it at least represents an addition to their use as community gathering places for a variety of purposes. In fact, the earlier Neolithic enclosure sites already seem to have had a similar range of functions.

Last but not least, it should not be forgotten that the market was also a place of communication from which news spread quickly within a community. New things, technologies and innovations would first become visible there for a large percentage of the population. For those engaged in agriculture and dispersed in small farmsteads – that is, the greatest part of the population in pre-modern times – events in the market or at a fair would have been the only time in the year, or for months or weeks on end, where news from far away could be received. This role of the market as the main place for exchanges of news should not be underestimated. Human history is full of examples of upheavals starting in squares and market places where large group of men met and assembled. Already in the Bronze Age market places and public areas were considered to be trouble spots in times of uprisings (Altenmüller 1980: 1193) and therefore feared by the rulers. According to the Middle Kingdom literature work 'Admonitions of Amenemhat', dating from the early second millennium BC, the assassination of Pharaoh Amenemhat I was the result of the 'slanderous gossip' circulating in a market. Similarly the coup against the king of Emar in northern Mesopotamia apparently started in the market, though eventually it was quelled (Adamthwaite 2001: 237).

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Chapter 3

Beyond the market: Reflections on the archaeological remains of exchange processes[1]

Laura Picht

Introduction

Working as an archaeologist means working with the remains of past cultures. These remains need not be material, even though most of them are since, at least for historical periods, we also have all sorts of textual and pictorial sources. As taking all these remains together creates a mass of information which cannot be considered equally in every piece of research, working on a particular scientific problem means working with a carefully chosen selection of material and immaterial sources. Which remains can be used to investigate ancient Greek markets? First of all, there are the Agorai, the market places of which architectural traces are preserved in many ancient cities. Thanks to Aristotle, we also know where these Agorai should ideally be located and that there should be two of them in each city, one for political and another for commercial affairs (Aristotle, *Politics*, VII. 12). In addition, the architectural remains give us some hints about what the Agorai looked like and which kinds of buildings would have been placed around a market place. Use of these buildings, particularly the Stoai, has already been the subject of dozens of publications (see, among others, Coulton 1976; Höpfner 2006; Sielhorst 2015).

However, as my title says, in this paper I intend to go beyond the market. That means rather than focusing on these architectural remains or on the processes that might have taken place in these ancient Agorai, most of which

cannot be reconstructed anyway, I will concentrate on another sort of remains: those of goods sold in ancient markets. What does this mean? Because of preservation processes, commodities like food and clothes, which are made of perishable materials, can normally no longer be found, though objects made of metal, stone or clay can be. In fact, even metal is rather rare, nor are small finds made of stone that frequent, but there are masses of pottery sherds which can be used to investigate trade in the ancient world. As objects of daily use, vessels allow us to pose and at least partly answer a number of questions concerning the field of the market in its widest sense, such as what was bought and sold, and why was it consumed? As a result, we not only acquire information about the products sold or eaten in certain vessels, but also about the vessels themselves. Ancient pottery did function as packaging for commodities, yet it was traded for its own sake.

Methodical issues

In this chapter, I will use the spectrum of pottery found in certain Hellenistic cities as a case study to examine the question of which pots were bought and which were not. To acquire an understanding of the consumption of pottery, it is important to elaborate on the characteristics of the pottery spectrum of each city. Before doing so, some methodological remarks are in order. Since this study is based on publications, some of these differences may be 'self-made', which means that they are based on the preferences of the different authors instead of actual historical incidents. Already during excavations, only a fraction of the vessels used in antiquity are uncovered. In addition, during publication, the excavators have to make a selection. Therefore, normally only the well-preserved or richly decorated vessels are actually published, especially in the case of older publications. Hence, working with publications means working with a subjective perception which must not be representative. To make matters worse, for small fragments it is often impossible to say which kind of vessel they came from, meaning that even more sherds have to be excluded from this study. Nonetheless, bearing this in mind, some 'real' historical trends can still be established.

Working with publications is only possible because the pottery of the cities I examine here is already well known, and a quite detailed typology

has been established for each city. However, these typologies are usually drawn up for dating purposes, which requires a degree of attention to detail that restricts their comparability. Since this chapter is not primarily concerned with chronological questions but aims rather to understand broader trends, a broader version of these typologies that lends itself to comparisons has been devised for it.[2] Besides this degree of comparability, for a more cultural-historical view of the vessels, the ways in which they have been used are of importance. In order analyze this, it is vital to differentiate between the vessel's functional and aesthetic characteristics. Here, aspects like the existence of a foot and/or handles and the vessel's proportions are considered functionally relevant, while the decoration of the vessel is an aesthetic characteristic and therefore not taken into consideration in distinguishing types. What does this mean for the material being examined here?

Sometime in the third century BC, the astonishingly homogeneous picture of the pottery of the classical period gives way to a burst of innovation. Until this turning point, black-glazed pottery, either imported from Athens or imitated locally, predominated. Thereafter, impacts from the East and the West led to the typical repertoire of Hellenistic ceramics found in Greece and Asia Minor, which consisted of a wide range of forms and colours. Due to this diversity in the last three to four centuries BC, examining the whole spectrum would mean going beyond the scope of this paper. Therefore, I will focus on drinking vessels, which, due to their use in the symposion, are of crucial importance for the self-understanding of the ancient Greeks. In addition, they seem to have undergone the most profound changes. Three different forms can be distinguished based on their respective functionalities (Fig. 3.1): 1) the Kantharos/Skyphos types, with rather deep proportions, a more or less elaborated foot and vertical or horizontal handles;[3] 2) the two-handled cups, which do also have two mostly horizontal handles, but are distinguished from the Kantharoi/Skyphoi by broader, shallower proportions and simpler feet; 3. the hemispherical cups, also deep, but lacking any kind of foot or handles.

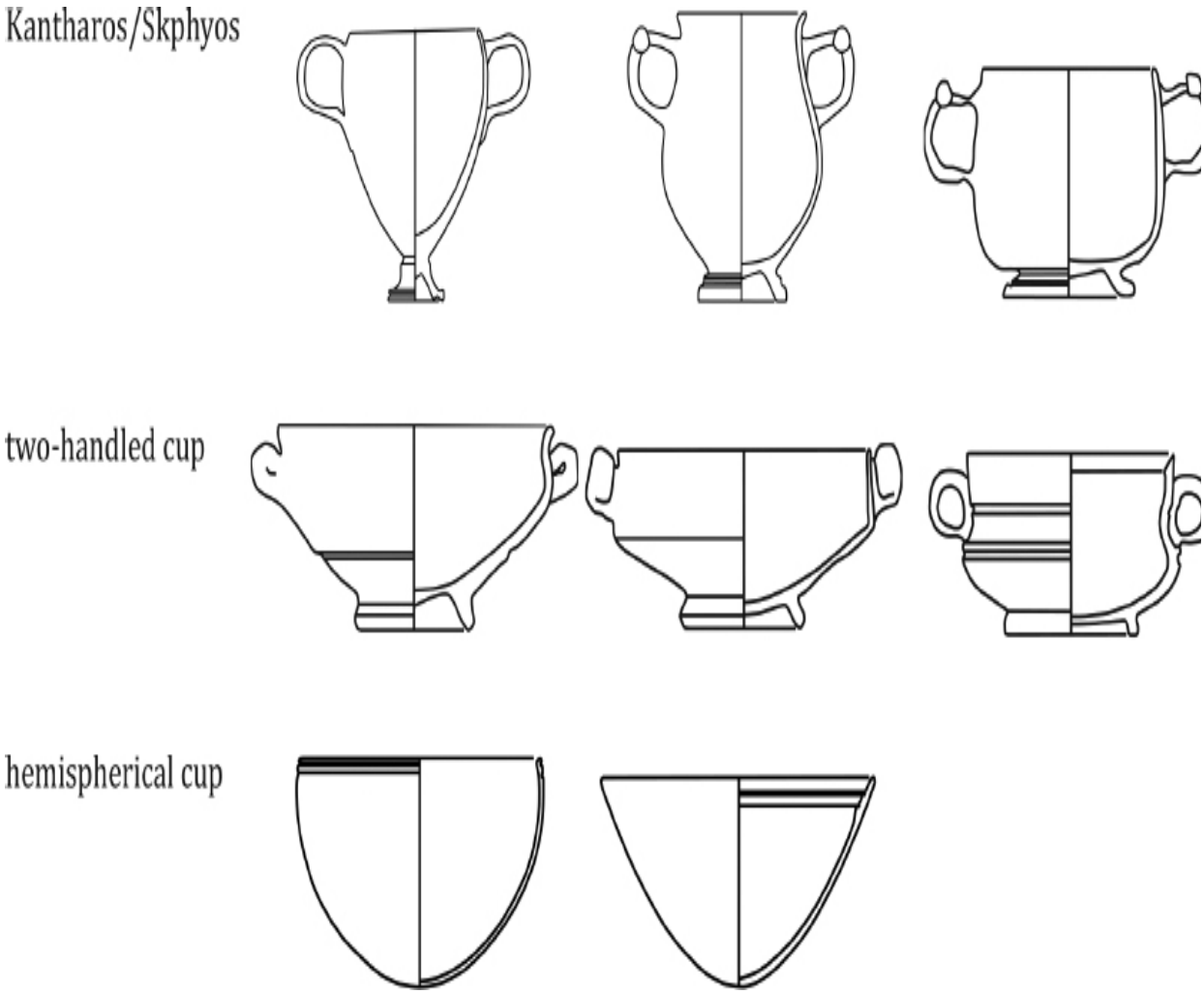


Fig. 3.1: Simplified overview over the range of Hellenistic drinking vessels (without scale). There are only some examples of each form displayed. Especially for the Kantharoi/Skyphoi a much wider range of types is proven (drawing by Laura Picht).

Getting an overview – description of the material basis

How did this range of drinking vessels change in the Hellenistic period? For the purposes of this chapter, a brief overview may be sufficient. As in classical times, in the fourth and third centuries BC, vessels with foot and handles are still preferred. Although the Kantharoi/Skyphoi are quite popular in early Hellenistic times, they lose some of their importance in the late third and second centuries BC (see, among others, Mitsopoulos-Leon 1991: 33–37, 80; Rotroff 1997: 83–107; De Luca and Radt 1999: 85–86; Kögler 2010: 113–116, 122–123). The picture changes again when new Pergamene Kantharos/Skyphos types emerge in the second half of the second century

(see especially Meyer-Schlichtmann 1988: 62–74). As already mentioned, in addition to these deep forms, there are also rather wide vessels with foot and handles, that is, the two-handled cups. For the fourth and the beginning of the third centuries, these are the so-called Bolsals (see especially Sparkes and Talcott 1970: 107–108; Rotroff 1997: 97). Then, after a slight gap, two new types of cup emerge in the east, the so-called Palestinian cup, and the carinated or Knidian cup (see, among others, Meyer-Schlichtmann 1988: 64–65; Rotroff 1997: 117–119; Kögler 2010: 83–85, 95–105). However, the most common and characteristic Hellenistic drinking vessel is the hemispherical cup (see, among others, Rotroff 1982, *passim*; 1997: 107–117; Meyer-Schlichtmann 1988: 75–80; Mitsopoulos-Leon 1991: 38, 55–57. 67–70; De Luca and Radt 1999: 84–85, 92–109; Kögler 2010: 123–131, 254–255, 296–298). Although all Hellenistic cities followed these trends to a certain degree, there are some differences in every case.

What do these differences look like? Three cities with different characteristics will be chosen to demonstrate the tendencies in various parts of the Hellenistic world. The first is Athens, because it was the trendsetter in the classical period, and also because it is still one of the best investigated sites concerning Hellenistic pottery. Therefore, there can hardly be any study of Hellenistic pottery without including Athens. In addition, Athens has some historical importance: during the sixth and fifth centuries, Ionian Athens was one of the most important cities, perhaps reflected in the predominance of black-glazed pottery all over the Greek world. Yet, because of the Peloponnesian War at the end of the fifth century, it lost this power (Meier 2004, *passim*; Sinn 2004: 21–51). As a result, it was able to keep out of the ongoing conflicts on the Peloponnese until it was included in the Macedonian sphere of influence at the end of the fourth century BC (Sinn 2004: 60–61). Although Athens never really accepted the Macedonian domination and tried to throw it off with the help of the Ptolemies, it remained Macedonian until the death of Demetrios II in 229 BC. Thereafter, it was a free city until the establishment of the Roman province of Achaea in 146 BC (DNP 2 (1997) 193 s. v. Athenai (K.-W. Welwei)). Even before that it profited, at least economically, from the Romans, who, after their conflict with Rhodes, declared Delos a free port and put Athens in charge of its

administration (Sinn 2004, 65). However, Athens' ongoing attempts to regain its autonomy finally led to the destruction of the city by Sulla in 86 BC. Nevertheless, its reconstruction began shortly afterwards, and Athens remained a cultural center (Hayes 2008: 8; DNP 2 (1997) 195–196 s. v. Athenai (W. Eder)).

Looking at the complete spectrum of Hellenistic drinking vessels found in Athens (the statistics provided here are mainly based on Sparkes and Talcott 1970; Rotroff 1982; 1997; Hayes 2008, as well as the fragments published in further articles), it is clear that the fourth and third centuries were dominated by the Kantharoi/Skyphoi (Fig. 3.2; Sparkes and Talcott 1970: 81, 83–85, 117–124; Rotroff 1997: 83–107). In the first half of the third century, hemispherical cups emerge and supplant the Kantharoi/Skyphoi in the second half of that century (Rotroff 1982: *passim*; 1997: 107–117). Both forms nonetheless remain in use at least until the end of the first century BC, but in decreasing amounts. However, the hemispherical cups remain dominant. In the case of the so-called Bolsals, two-handled cups are still occasionally evident in the fourth century (Sparkes and Talcott 1970: 107–108; Rotroff 1997: 97), though they do not really gain in importance before the emergence of the Palestinian and carinated cups in the second half of the third century (Rotroff 1997: 117–119). Like the other forms, they last into the first century BC but always played only a secondary role.

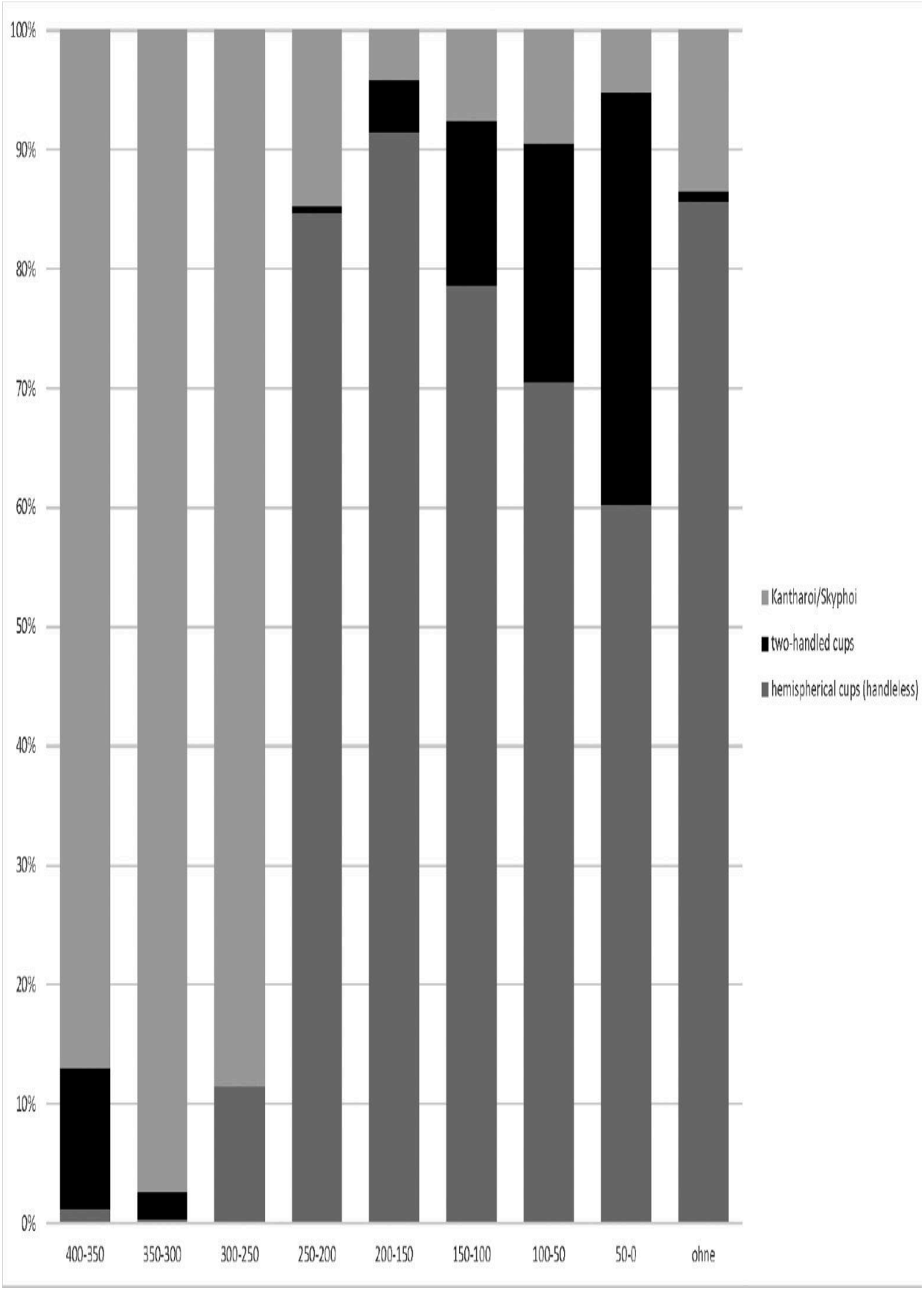

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Fig. 3.2: Chronological distribution of drinking vessel forms found in Athens. Fragments whose date range falls in more than one of these half centuries were equally split. Consequently, pieces dating in Augustan times and therefore reaching beyond the chronological frame of this study were counted as 0.5. (400–350 BC: n=164,83; 350–300: n=319,83; 300–250: n=200,58; 250–200: n=181,58; 200–150: n=252,17; 150–100: n=67; 100–50: n=38,74; 50–0: n=22,41; without dating=112).

In contrast to this Ionian city, Knidos (Fig. 3.2), our second example, was a Doric settlement, possibly a colony of Sparta (Hdt. I: 174; Bruns-Özgan and Eravşar 2002: 8; Bresson 2009: 110–111; Tuna 2012: 11). As we know from Herodotus, it belonged to an association of several Doric cities, the so-called Doric Pentapolis.[4] Every four years, this association celebrated a festival at the temple of Apollon Karneios, which was situated in the urban area of Knidos (Jefremow 1995: 33; Bruns-Özgan and Eravşar 2002: 9; Bankel 2004: 105–106; Bresson 2009: 111). A parallel phenomenon is known from the Ionian cities. However, the location of the temple shows that Knidos must have been of some political importance. Due to its strategic position at the peninsula's end, it also had some economic power (Love 1978: 1111–1112).[5] The existence of two harbours and direct access to some of the main trade routes – one from the east to the Black Sea and another to the west in the direction of Athens – connected the city to the maritime trade (Berges 2000: 163; Bruns-Özgan and Eravşar 2002: 5–6). Like the other Greek cities of the region, Knidos fell under Persian rule after the conquest of Asia Minor in 546 BC. Thereafter, it belonged first to the Delian League till around 412 BC, when it defected to Sparta, Athens' eternal opponent, during the Peloponnesian War (Bruns-Özgan and Eravşar 2002: 10–11; Tuna 2012: 14). However, its good relationship with Athens before its defection may have been formative for the trade in the Hellenistic period. With the King's peace in 387 BC, Knidos fell back under Persian rule until it was liberated again by Alexander (Jefremow 1995: 34). We do not know exactly what happened after Alexander's death, but it seems that during the time of the Diadochi, Knidos was mainly under Ptolemaic rule until it presumably fell under the influence of Rhodes during the Second Syrian War (Jefremow 1995: 34–42; Bruns-Özgan and Eravşar 2002: 18; Tuna 2012: 18). Although testified as a free city around 165, it belonged to the Roman province of Asia from 133 BC, though its good relations with Rome enabled it to keep its status as a *civitas libera* (Jefremow 1995: 45–46; Tuna 2012: 20–21). In

addition, the increasing influence of Rome had a positive effect on Knidian trade, mainly in wine and olive oil, as can be shown by the diffusion of Knidian amphorae (Bruns-Özgan and Eravşar 2002: 19, 22).

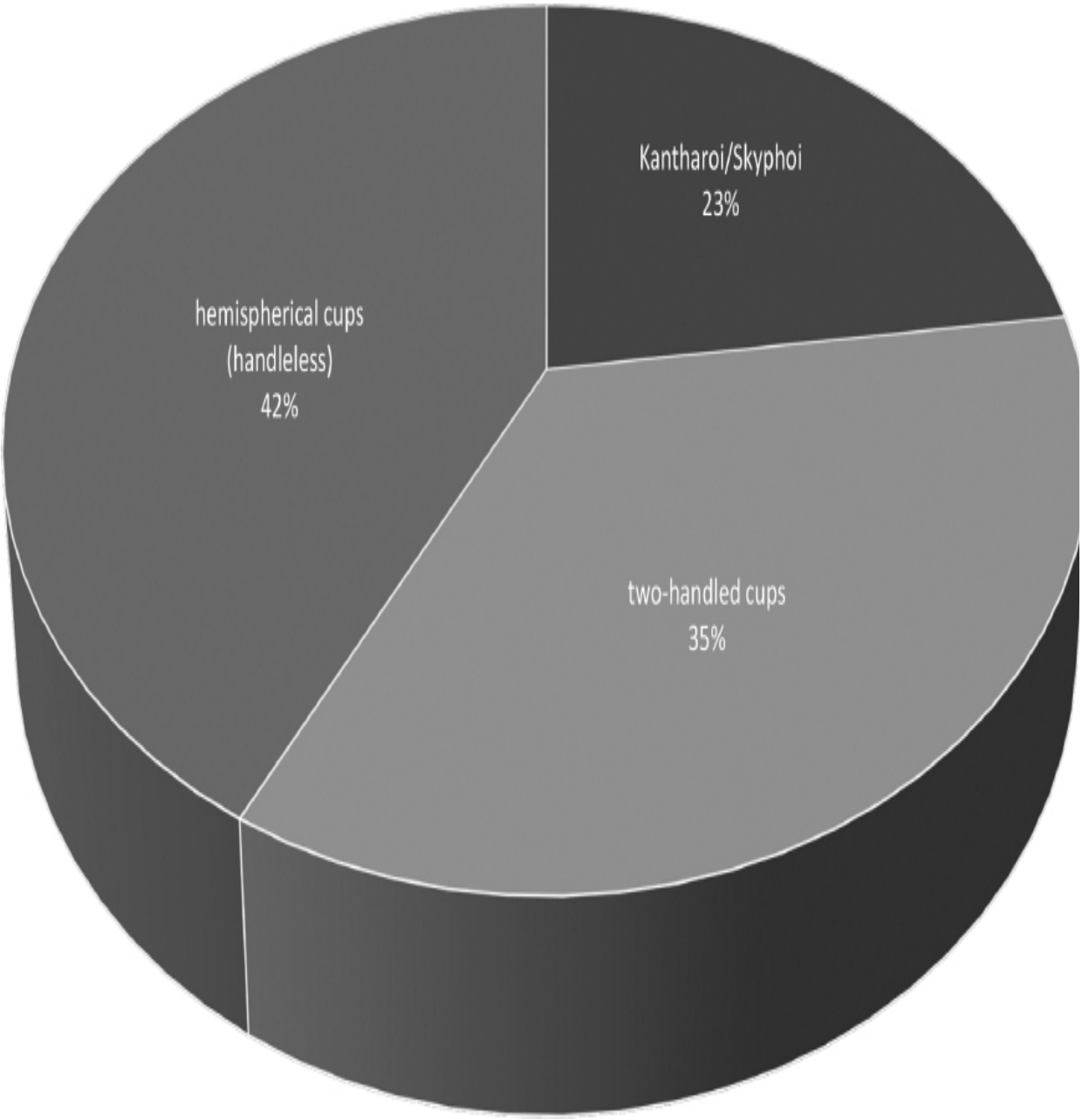


Fig. 3.3: Percentages of drinking vessel forms found in Knidos (n=365).

Looking at all the drinking vessels used in Knidos, we can see a preference for hemispherical and two-handled cups, especially carinated cups (Fig. 3.3).[6] Among the hemispherical cups, those with *Kerbdekor* were

the most popular (Kögler 2010: 123–132, 296–304). Both favorites are Knidian inventions and seem to be quite rare at other sites (Doksanaltı 2003: 27–29; Kassab Tezgör 2003: 41; Kögler 2014: 158–159). The carinated cups emerged in the third century (Fig. 3.4; Mandel *et al*. 1996: 64; Kögler 2010: 83–91). Although they resemble the classical drinking cups, they seem to be a new creation which only uses some elements of older cup types (Kögler 2010: 89–90; 2014: 159). Their life span reaches into the Roman imperial period. Besides these, several other types of two-handled cups were also in use (Kassab Tezgör 2003: 38–39; Kögler 2010: 83–105). Kantharoi and Skyphoi are present in Knidos, but only in relatively small amounts (Kögler 2010: 113–123), perhaps reflecting the popularity of two-handled cups. The impression of the dominance of Kantharoi/Skyphoi in the fourth and the beginning of the third centuries on the graph might be misleading because it could be a result of specific conditions of preservation. Almost no pottery has been preserved in Knidos from this period, so it can be assumed that other types of drinking vessels, like two-handled cups, were also used.

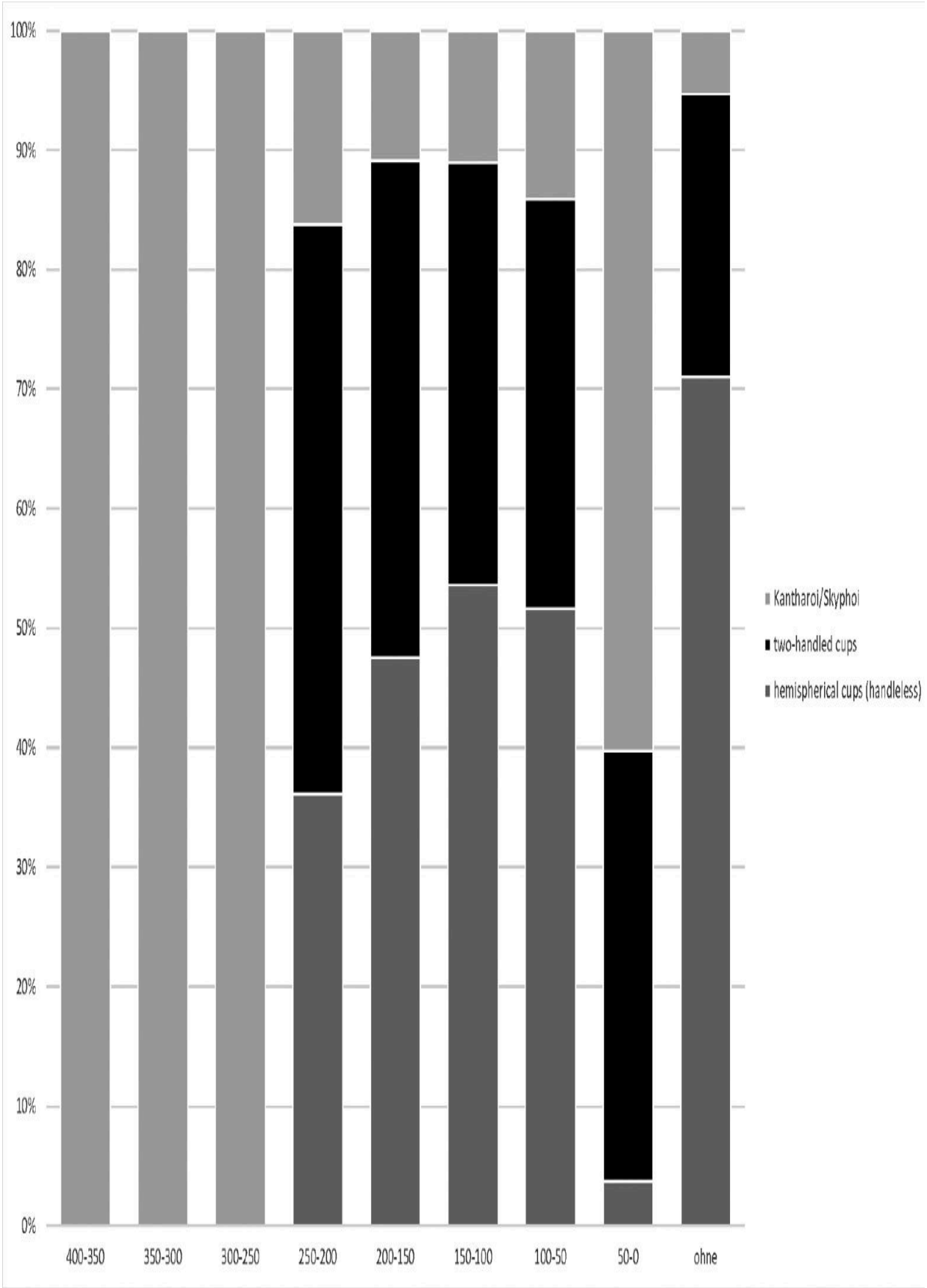

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two-handled cups
hemispherical cups (handleless)

Fig. 3.4: Chronological distribution of drinking vessel forms found in Knidos. Fragments whose date range falls in more than one of these half centuries were equally split. Consequently, pieces dating in Augustan times and therefore reaching beyond the chronological frame of this study were counted as 0.5. (400–350 BC: n=1,33; 350–300: n=3,84; 300–250: n=5,33; 250–200: n=45,10; 200–150: n=49,21; 150–100: n=86,08; 100–50: n=72,31; 50–0: n=63,31; without dating = 38).

Our third example, the city of Pergamon, which is neither Ionian nor Doric, but situated in the Aeolis, is archaeologically attested from the eighth century BC onwards (Fig. 3.2). There may even have been some kind of small settlement here when the Aeolians came to Asia Minor earlier in the first millennium BC. However, most of the population of Pergamon might not have been Greek at all, but consisted rather of local people. We do not know much about the history of Pergamon before the third century, but it does not seem to have been that important in the classical period. Like the other cities in Asia Minor in the fifth and fourth centuries, it belonged to the Persian Empire until being liberated by Alexander in 334 BC (Radt 1999: 23–25). Thereafter, it fell under the control of Lysimachos, who established Philetairos as a guard over Pergamon, where he had stored a large part of the booty he acquired in the war against Antigonos. This treasure enabled Philetairos to act relatively independently, both under the rule of Lysimachos and, after his death, that of the Seleucids (*ibid.*: 27–29; Schalles 1985: 4–5). It was his successor Eumenes I who rose against the Seleucids and defeated them in a battle at Sardes in 262/261 BC. This led to Pergamene territory being extended and enabled Eumenes to behave as an autocratic ruler. However, it was again his successor, Attalos I, who finally assumed regal status after his glorious victory over the Galatians (Schalles 1985: 51; Radt 1999: 29–30). Ruled by the Attalids, and despite some setbacks, Pergamon successively extended its sphere of influence by fighting against the Seleucids and the Macedonians (Schalles 1985: 66–67; Radt 1999: 31). In addition, Pergamon was the earliest city in Asia Minor to establish diplomatic relations with Rome, which may be one reason why it became one of the most significant powers in Asia Minor after the Peace of Apameia in 188 BC (Hopp 1977: 34). However, due to a change in Roman policy in the East, it increasingly lost its autonomy, leading to it being bequeathed to the Romans in 133 BC. Besides its political success, Pergamon gained particular importance as a center of Greek culture under Hellenism,

comparable to cities such as Athens, Alexandria or Antioch (Hopp 1977: 15; Radt 1999: 31–39, 277).

Because of the revolt of Aristonikos, it took until 129 BC to establish the Roman province of Asia with Pergamon as its capital, as a result of which the Romans declared Pergamon a free city. However, it lost this privilege after 85 BC because it supported Mithridates of Pontos in his war against the Roman province. As a consequence, it had to pay large amounts in taxes, as well as a penalty which ruined the city financially. Although an economic revival can be observed from the second quarter of the first century BC, Pergamon lost its importance and became just one city among others. However, the exploitation of the province of Asia by Roman publicans continued until Augustus came to power, and weakened all the cities in Asia Minor, at least financially (Radt 1999: 40–44).

Reviewing all the drinking vessels used in Pergamon from the fourth to first centuries BC, it can be seen that the Kantharoi/Skyphoi are a good deal more popular than the two handled-cups (Fig. 3.5).[7] The same applies to the hemispherical cups, which seem to be almost as common as the Kantharoi/Skyphoi. However, the importance of the latter is strengthened by the fact that the Pergamene potters invented a new type in the second century BC (Meyer-Schlichtmann 1988: 62–74; Japp 2014: 16). Jörg Schäfer (1968: 17) argues that the hemispherical cups emerge in the third century, as is also shown in the material examined here (Fig. 3.6). However, they do not really appear to have been popular before the second century and are already losing this popularity in the first half of the first century. Instead the Kantharoi/Skyphoi are quite dominant throughout the whole period being investigated in this study (Schäfer 1968: 37–38; Meyer-Schlichtmann 1988: 62–74;). The two-handled cups, which were also used in Pergamon in the fourth century, but vanished in the third, emerge again – quite slowly – in the course of the second century (Meyer-Schlichtmann 1988: 64–65, 68, 84–85). However, a fact common to all these forms is that they all reach at least into the first century BC.

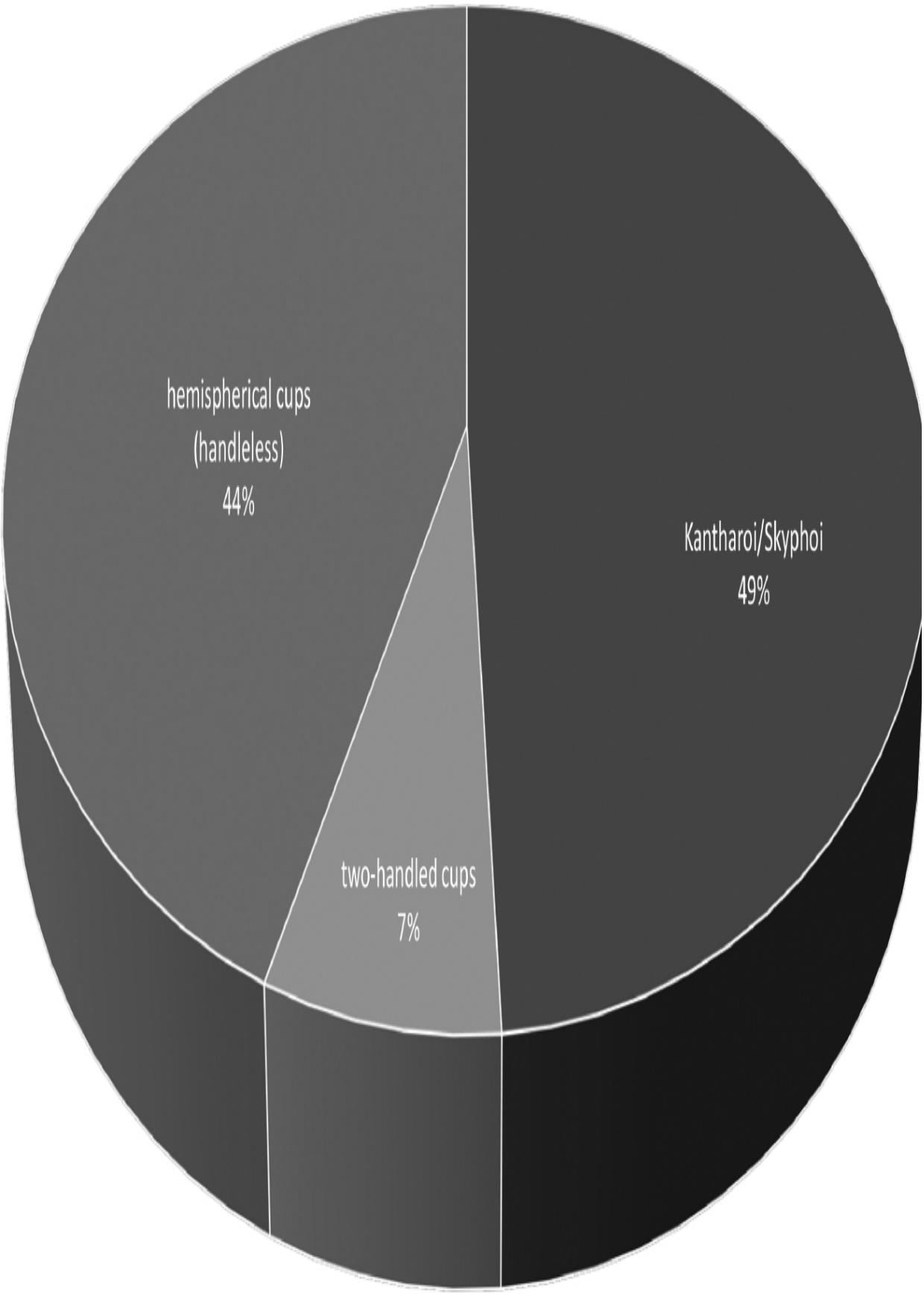

hemispherical cups
(handleless)
44%
Kantharoi/Skyphoi
49%
two-handled cups
7%

Fig. 3.5: Percentages of drinking vessel forms found in Pergamon. (n=783).

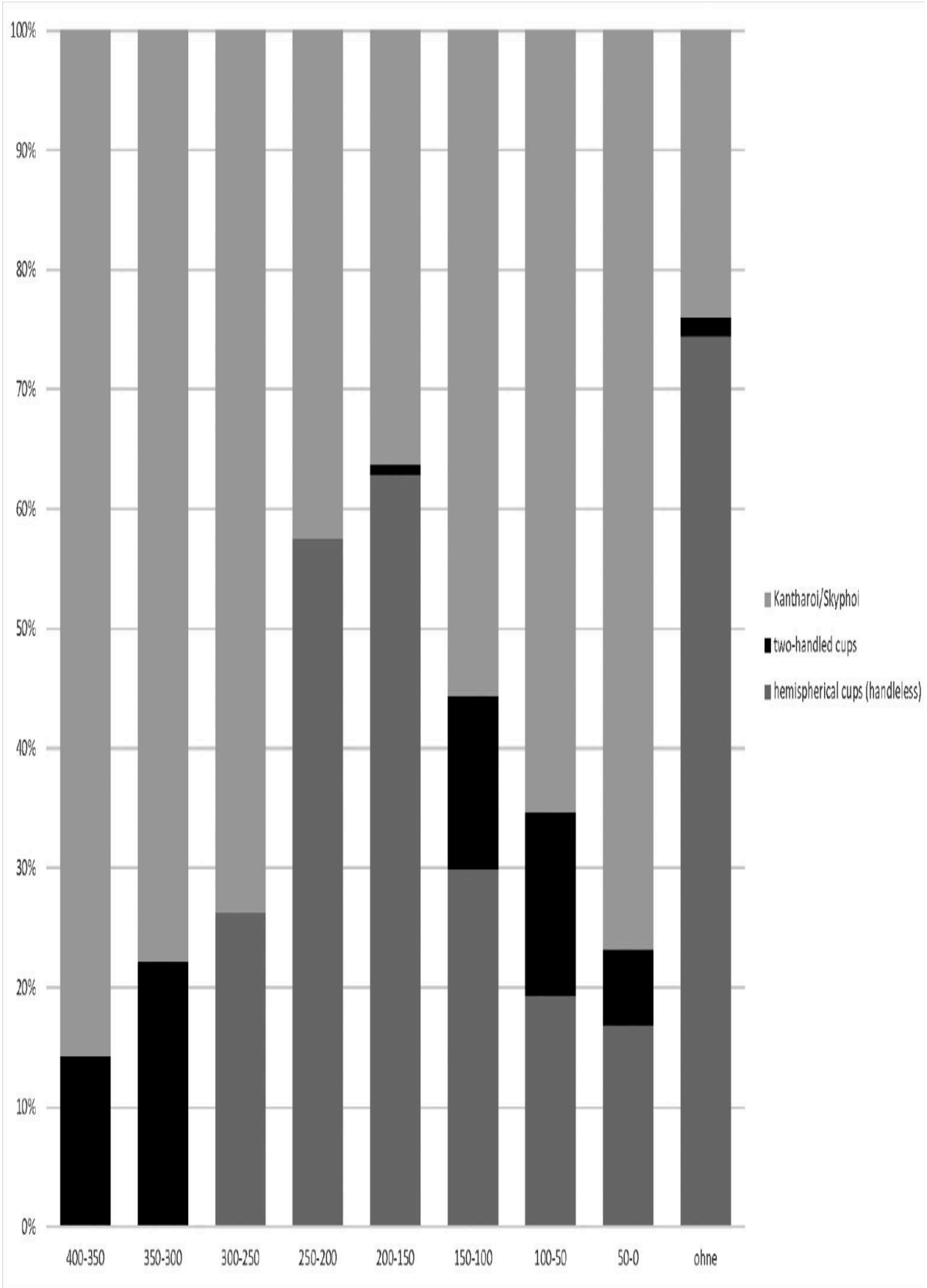

100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
400-350
350-300
300-250
250-200
200-150
150-100
100-50
50-0
ohne
Kantharoi/Skyphoi
two-handled cups
hemispherical cups (handleless)

Fig. 3.6: Chronological distribution of drinking vessel forms found in Pergamon. Fragments whose date range falls in more than one of these half centuries where equally split. Consequently, pieces dating in Augustan times and therefore reaching beyond the chronological frame of this study were counted as 0.5. (400–350 BC: n=7; 350–300: n=4,5; 300–250: n=21,53; 250–200: n=73,67; 200–150: n=122,08; 150–100: n=150,48; 100–50: n=119,84; 50–0: n=92,07; without dating = 192).

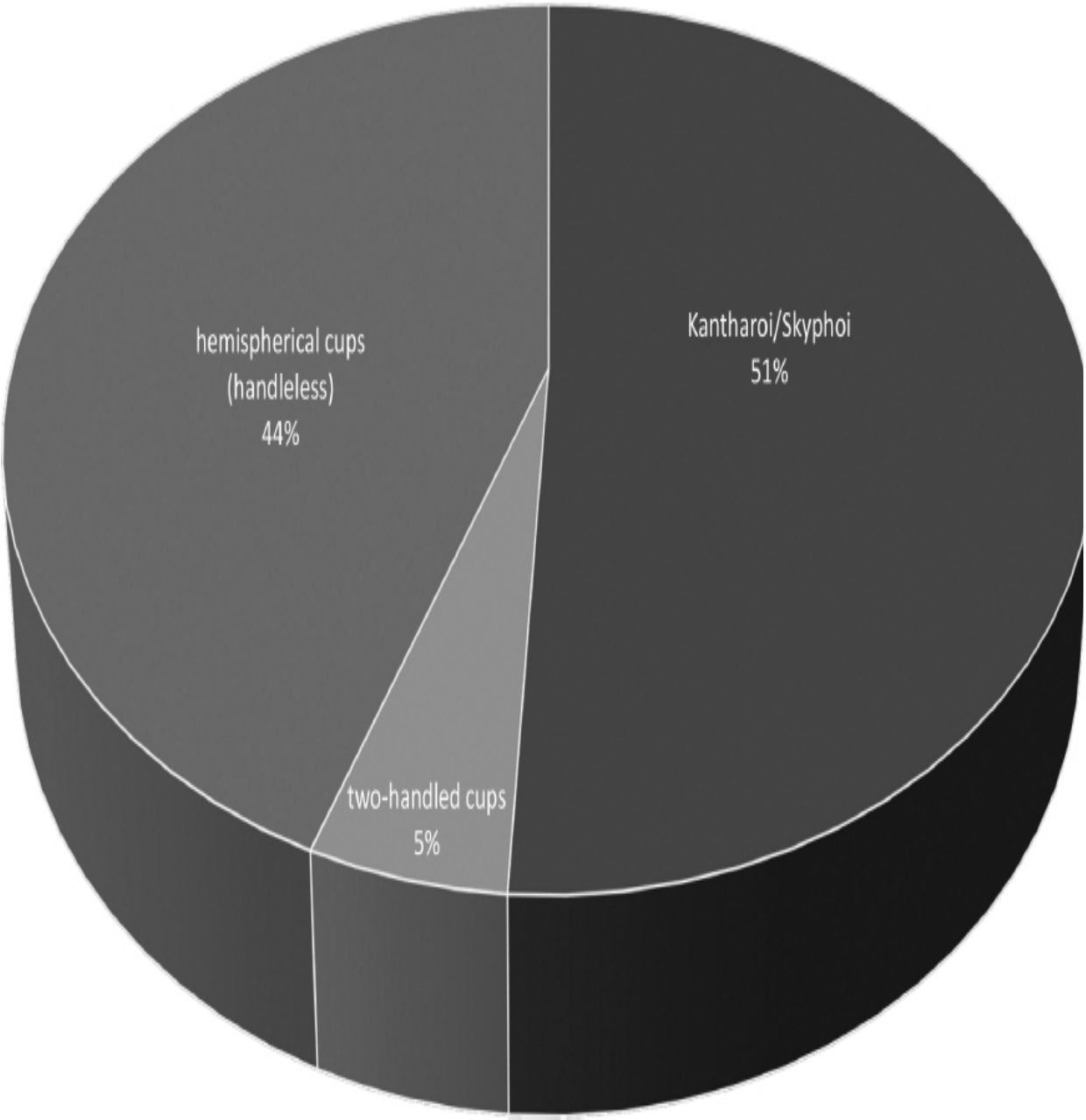


Fig. 3.7: Percentages of drinking vessel forms found in Athens (n=1359).

Summing up, one reaches the following conclusions: Athens, the only example from the Greek mainland, seems to be the most conservative.

Although the new forms were adapted, the Athenians still used Skyphoi and Kantharoi in almost equal numbers (Fig. 3.7). One might object to this that the Skyphos/Kantharos types used in Hellenistic Athens are also new inventions and can therefore not be distinguished from the other drinking vessels, like the hemispherical cups. In fact, the Skyphos/Kantharos types that predominate in Athens have all been developed out of older, classical types and can thus be addressed as traditional (Sparkes and Talcott 1970: 81, 84, 113–114; Rotroff 1997: 83, 85–86, 92–99, 105). However, although maybe somewhat conservative, Athens was the origin of the two most important decorative schemes used in Hellenistic pottery: west-slope decoration and mold-made hemispherical cups (Rotroff 1982: 6–13; 1997: 41), the latter the dominant form of hemispherical cups found in Athens. Thus, for Athens, one receives the impression that a certain conservatism in vessel forms goes together with innovation concerning their decoration. Beyond that, the large quantities of hemispherical cups show that the Athenians were nevertheless open to integrating innovations into their spectrum of drinking vessels. This integration, which took place in the second half of the third century BC, goes together with a significant decline in the appearance of the Kantharoi/Skyphoi, despite their being present throughout the whole Hellenism (Fig. 3.3).

At first sight, the picture we obtain for Pergamon – a city which played an important role in Asia Minor during Hellenism – seems to be almost identical to the impression we have of Athens, namely that the Skyphoi/Kantharoi represent nearly half the quantity of drinking vessels in use. Yet, upon closer scrutiny a crucial difference is revealed: while the Skyphoi/Kantharoi types used in Athens can mostly be derived from older forms without a significant gap, the types dominant in Pergamon, although also somehow recalling older models, do not follow these models straightaway. Instead they emerge in the second century BC, significantly later than the extinction of these models (Behr 1988: 129; Meyer-Schlichtmann 1988: 62–74; Rotroff 1997: 83–107; Japp 2014: 16). It can also be stated that only traces of the range of earlier Kantharos/Skyphos types known from Athens can be found in Pergamon, while the typical Pergamene types are quite rare in Athens.

The range of drinking vessels found in Knidos, a city that seems to have been rather unimportant politically, is reasonably different because here the Skyphoi/Kantharoi are quite rare, while the so-called carinated cups tend to predominate. As with other types of this form, like the Palestinian cups, these were also integrated into the pottery spectrum of the other two cities, but always only in small numbers. All in all, it can be concluded that two-handled cups were generally more popular in Knidos than in Athens, and even fewer examples are known from Pergamon. Despite this peculiarity concerning the drinking vessels with handles, hemispherical cups were as important in Knidos as in Athens or Pergamon.

Taking a closer look – imports vs. local products

Until now, we have considered the whole spectrum of excavated drinking vessels in each city without distinguishing between foreign and locally made pottery. Distinguishing between the two may provide even more information. First of all, it has to be stated that the local pottery was dominant in all three cities, but a certain amount of foreign pottery is also always present.

In the case of Athens, this foreign drinking vessels comprise Pergamene appliqué ware, normally Skyphoi, mold-made hemispherical cups most probably from Asia Minor, as well as from other production sites, grey ware from Knidos and other fine ware (Rotroff 1982: 42; 1997: 221–222). Relatively little material seems to have been imported from Italy, although pottery of very high quality was being produced there (Rotroff 1997: 221). Yet, it should not be forgotten that, at least for the pottery with west-slope decoration, we can also detect some serious influence from the west, in this case the Gnathia ware. Some imports may be Boiotian and Corinthian, but the bulk of the foreign pottery originated in the east, particularly from the west coast of Asia Minor, including Pergamon and Knidos (*ibid*.: 221–222). It must be stressed that, besides the Pergamene appliqué ware, all these foreign vessels were also imitated locally. Yet, there is also no drinking vessel form which is not attested in the foreign pottery.

Notwithstanding the different places the drinking vessels originated from, foreign pottery was very rare in Athens in the early Hellenistic period. In any

case, Athenian exports were already falling by this time (Schäfer 1968: 10). Yet the number of foreign vessels grew constantly from the second century onwards. While in the first half of the second century there seems to be no preference for any specific direction, after *c*. 150 the products of eastern potters predominate (Rotroff 1997: 222–223).

In the case of Pergamon, unfortunately, the state of publications concerning foreign pottery is not very good, such pottery hardly being mentioned at all before about 2009. As a result, the impression that almost no foreign pottery was in use in Pergamon in Hellenistic times might be false. However, more recent publications point out that this lack of evidence is not only a problem of research history, it also reflects the actual state of preservation (Japp 2003: 243; 2009: 197; 2013: 171). It is primarily the typological and stylistic aspects that show Pergamene pottery was interdependent with that of many other places in the Mediterranean. Schäfer even states that the Pergamene pottery resembles Athenian pottery more than any other eastern Mediterranean production (Schäfer 1968: 18). That might be true for stylistic aspects, but, as shown above, there are also some differences. For example, concerning the so-called west-slope decoration, a technique of decoration most probably invented in Athens, Pergamon started to develop independent ideas almost from the beginning (see especially Schäfer 1968: 16–17; Behr 1988: *passim*). From the middle of the first century BC at the latest, the spectrum of forms shows similarities with the Italic Arretina ware.[8] Yet, as stated above, actual imports seem to be quite rare in general, including of the drinking vessels being examined here (Japp 2009: 197). However, at least in the fourth century there were also vessels from Athens at Pergamon (De Luca 1968: 112; Schäfer 1968: 16–18; Japp 2013: 171), and other pottery might derive from Ionia (Japp 2003: 243; 2009: 197; 2013: 171). Italian thin-walled pottery is fairly rare.

In summary, following Sarah Japp it can be stated that the quantity of foreign vessels has generally proven to be small in Pergamon, mostly being confined to an east Mediterranean origin. Japp's explanation for this observation is that local potters must have been able to satisfy the needs of the Pergamene people. This can be correlated with the rise of pottery

production in the third century BC. Before that, in classical times, the spectrum was characterized by Attic imports (Japp 2012: 357).

According to ancient literary sources, Knidos was a commercial center in archaic and classical times. Unfortunately, we have almost no information about its status in later times. However, its location on important trade routes suggests that it still had some importance in the Hellenistic period (Kögler 2005: 50). This hypothesis is underlined by the widespread finds of Knidian amphora stamps (Jefremow 1995: 83–84; Tuna 2012: 32–36). It is thus not surprising that, besides the masses of locally produced pottery, there are also reasonable numbers of foreign pieces, comprising 5–10% of the total (Kögler 2010: 35, 369). Of these, there is evidence of drinking vessels from Athens, Ephesos and Pergamon (Kögler and Mandel 2004: 81; Kögler 2005: 51–53; 2010: 369–370). Yet, some chronological differences can be observed. Thus, at least for the west-slope pottery, the vessels from Athens end in the third century, while those from Pergamon increase at that time and last until the first century BC (Kögler 2005: 52–53; 2010: 36–37). As in Pergamon, local products follow Athenian examples until the third century. Yet, along with the breaking away of Athenian vessels, the local potters start to follow their own paths (Kögler 2010: 38, all the other foreign pottery was also imitated in the local production: see Kögler 2005: 51–52; 2010: 39). In early imperial times the range of foreign drinking vessels is increased by still rather rare pieces from the west, like thin-walled ware (Kögler 2005: 55–56). Although the proportion of foreign pottery is generally not very high, it still influenced the local production, as can be seen in the adoption of forms and stylistic elements. Maybe, as Patricia Kögler suggests, this adoption was an attempt on the part of local workshops to keep imports from the outside under their own control (Kögler 2010: 39–40).

Summing up, what information do we obtain from examining the drinking vessels that were imported and exported by these three cities? As already mentioned, imports from Athens dominated the market until the middle of the third century. Thereafter, other production centers were able to increase their own influence. Similarly, as Athenian exports fall, an increase in imports into Athens can be observed. In contrast, the popularity of Pergamene pottery starts in the second century, just when the Attalid

kingdom becomes politically important. Yet, Pergamene exports reach their first peak in the first century BC. Imports from all three cities can be observed in all three cities throughout the Hellenistic period. Only Knidian pottery does not seem to predominate in Pergamon, if it existed there at all. However, despite Athens' loss of dominance in exports, all three cities belonged to the most important Hellenistic sites.

Conclusion

After describing the status quo, what conclusions can we draw from the picture we have acquired? As mentioned above, we can state conclusively that in all three cities the bulk of pottery consisted of local products. Less clear is the situation concerning foreign pottery: while only some of it can certainly be identified as imports in an economic sense, that is, as resulting from trade, for the most part it is not possible to determine how it reached the city. One possible way of detecting "real" imports might be by quantity: foreign pottery, which is preserved in reasonable numbers, might have been traded, while singular items could have been the property of travellers visiting the city. Taking these criteria into account, for Athens and Knidos only the Eastern Sigillata A can probably be considered a trade good, and in Pergamon even this is missing[9]. In Knidos, the same might be said of the so-called Pergamene Sigillata. Yet, although it is unclear whether most of the foreign pottery reached the city as trade goods, personal belongings, souvenirs or whatever, it still proves some sort of contact with the place of origin. And, notwithstanding how they were introduced, every one of these vessels can be regarded as a possible source of knowledge to the local population, which at least potentially led to some of the imitations observable in all three pottery spectra being examined here.

Concerning the question of what was traded, three observations can be made:

1. The vessels mostly used and therefore sold in all three cities were local products which differed in type and style from city to city, at least slightly.

2. Accordingly, imports are rather rare, and we cannot even be sure how most of the foreign pottery entered the city or why.
3. Irrespective of these uncertainties, the record of foreign pottery and its imitations, proof the knowledge as well as some interest regarding vessel types and decoration modes used elsewhere.

These observations lead us almost necessarily to consider the reason for the marginal role of imports in the present case. The most obvious answer might be that all three cities were able to produce fine ware pottery of high quality themselves, meaning that there was basically no need to import it from elsewhere. Yet, the proven interest in foreign pottery that is evident from the imitations gives this answer a notion of insufficiency. This notion becomes even more relevant when we switch from the level of differentiation between local production and imports to adopt a more comprehensive view of the whole spectrum of drinking vessels. As mentioned in the introduction, in classical times the vessels used in different cities of the Greek Mediterranean all looked quite similar because they followed Athenian standards. This uniformity was lost some time during the third century and gave way to the increased level of diversity described in this chapter. How can this development be explained?

Based on the material, trade and production seem the most obvious explanations. The reduction in imports, combined with the rise in local production, might be a factor in the individualization of the drinking vessels used in the different cities. Yet, accepting this leads one to ask further questions like the one mentioned above. What were the reasons for the marginal role of imports in Hellenistic times? Which factors led to these increases in local production as the other side of the coin? Have historical events been a factor influencing the production, trade and use of pottery, especially in our case drinking vessels? As shown by the short summaries given here, each of these cities developed quite differently during Hellenism. Two events, which, despite being the opposite of each other, can be considered comparable are the rise of Pergamon and the decline of Athens as political and military players. The growth of the Pergamene kingdom is documented by several archaeological and written sources. Did the potters react to its rise? The surviving archaeological material suggests that they did

so in quite an impressive and direct way. The flourishing of the Attalid kingdom led almost immediately to the flourishing of pottery production, which was not only able to satisfy the local market but also to participate in a supra-regional trade.

Bearing this in mind, one looks for a comparable pattern in Athens. The Peloponnesian War at the end of the fifth century BC marks the end of the public prosperity of Athens. Thereafter, it loses both political and economic importance. Accordingly, one would expect an immediate decline in the production of and trade in pottery. Yet, the supra-regional dominance of the Attic black gloss, with its grand past and many workshops in its back, lasts until the end of the fourth century, and even thereafter local production is flourishing enough to satisfy the local market. Beyond that, with the invention of the mold-made hemispherical cups, Athens had a crucial impact on the range of drinking vessels across the whole Mediterranean. Thus, unlike in Pergamon, in Athens the production of and trade in pottery seems to have lagged behind historical events, if it reacted at all.

Finally, what about Knidos? Here we observed a remarkably innovative and autonomous pottery production, which led to the invention of the carinated cup and the *Kerbdekorbecher* – innovations of new versions of vessels that are also known from Pergamon (Kantharoi/Skyphoi) and Athens (mold-made hemispherical cups). However, opposed to these novelties, the Knidian ones were not as influential or as widespread. Regarding the access to some of the most important trade routes, a lack of opportunities cannot be the reason for that. Yet, at least compared to Pergamon, Knidos seems to have been relatively unimportant in post-Alexandrian Mediterranean politics. Might that be the explanation? Yet, if so, why was "unimportant" Athens occasionally able to jump into the minds of the Hellenistic kingdoms by spreading the idea of mold-made hemispherical cups?

These different reactions hint further at a greater variety of factors, which influenced the pottery spectrum of a certain city in a certain time. These factors might be of a socio-cultural, behavioral and even aesthetic nature.[10] Since it is not possible for an archaeologist to ask the citizens of ancient Athens, Pergamon or Knidos why they desired a certain pot, approaching these factors is a methodological challenge. Although pottery is the

foundation of a study such as this, it provides only limited information about these factors. Hence pictorial and written sources must be included in further studies.

Many questions have to remain open at this stage, but even this rough overview has clearly shown that it was always a mélange of factors which made the ancient market visitor decide to buy this vessel instead of that one and thus contribute to the specific material culture of a city or society. Yet, understanding and hence accepting this fact means saying goodbye to an overarching model explaining why some drinking vessels were traded while others were not. This question has to be posed from case to case, and we can only hope that by repeatedly considering all these factors we will come somewhere close to an answer.

Notes

1. This paper contains some preliminary results of my ongoing PhD thesis.
2. Martin Millett has already noted that the commonly used detailed typology primarily serves the aim of diversifying the material to establish a precise chronology. For other questions, such as the function of the vessels, however, a simpler division is more useful (Millett 1979: 37). See also Adams (1988: 43, 51–52).
3. Since the differentiation between Kantharos and Skyphos is often difficult, and since the definition of neither is clear-cut, use of both terms differing from publication to publication, I decided to remove the separation of the two.
4. This was originally a Hexapolis consisting of Halikarnassos, Knidos, Ialysos, Lindos, Kamiros and Kos. Halikarnassos was later excluded due to some wrong behavior concerning the use of a prize. Herodotus I, 144.
5. There is an ongoing scientific dispute about the location of the archaic and classical city of Knidos. However, since this article is about Hellenism this can be left aside here. For further information, see especially Berges (2000) and Bankel (2004).

6. Those shown here are mainly based on Kögler (2010), as well as the fragments published in further articles.
7. The statistics shown here are mainly based on Schäfer (1968); De Luca (1968; 1975); Nohlen and Radt (1978); Meyer-Schlichtmann (1988; 1999); Hübner (1993); Japp (2008); as well as the fragments published in further articles. For the two-handled cups, see Meyer-Schlichtmann (1988: 64–65, 68, 84–85).
8. According to Meyer-Schlichtmann (1988: 191–194), the early occurrence of these forms in Pergamon – seemingly even earlier than in the West – could be a hint that the Pergamene pottery influenced the Arretina and not the other way round.
9. At this point it has to be stressed, that this chapter is only focusing on drinking vessels. For other forms, ESA is also proven in Pergamon. See among others Japp (2009).
10. The role of aesthetics has already been mentioned by Rotroff as a factor in the importation of Pergamene pottery with appliqué decoration into Athens. See Rotroff (1997: 221).

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Chapter 4

Dealing with the foreign: The movement of artifacts and values in Bronze Age Europe

Lukas Wiggering

Introduction

Bronze Age trade was and still is an often discussed topic in archaeology. Together with the spread of bronze metallurgy, a heightened degree of interaction between different regions can be observed. A prime mover was the need for copper and tin to produce this new material. Recent studies show how far raw metal was traded, for example, connecting the Iberian Peninsula and England with Scandinavia (Ling *et al*. 2012; 2014). Finds of Baltic amber in Mycenaean shaft graves (Harding and Hughes-Brock 1974; Maran 2013) and blue glass beads from Mesopotamia and Egypt in Danish graves (Varberg *et al.* 2015) indicate even longer distances of exchange. These findings demonstrate exchange impressively, showing that even long-distance trade existed, even though archaeological evidence of Bronze Age trade is usually indirect. The exact means are obscured by and lost within the archeological sources, mainly 'because exchange is, self-evidently, something that takes place wholly in the sphere of circulation, or the "use life-cycle" of objects' (Needham 1993: 162).

In temperate Europe especially, it is only the results of exchange that can be observed. In the preserved material culture, 'foreign'[1] traits and objects occur repeatedly, stimulating discussion of the extent and character of cultural contact, especially between Northern and Central Europe and the more developed civilizations of the Eastern Mediterranean. First attempts

were made in the late nineteenth century by Sophus Müller and Oscar Montelius. During the early twentieth century, it was first and foremost Gordon Childe who extensively examined the possible impact of the Aegean on the Danube regions and the European Bronze Age. In his article 'Wessex without Mycenae', Colin Renfrew (1968) contrasted the dominating position of a heavy Eastern influence on Europe, thus taking the topic in a new direction. The topic has been repeatedly discussed in more recent papers to varying degrees, with a focus on different aspects and objects.

These different works show that wide-ranging connections can be traced through foreign objects, but the different interpretations, especially regarding cultural impacts, pose the question regarding how these foreign objects were dealt with and how they were received in a new cultural matrix. In the following, this problem will be discussed and illustrated with the help of two Early Bronze Age (EBA) examples.

The slotted blade from Kyhna

The first example is part of the hoard uncovered at Kyhna, Saxony. The hoard itself originates from one of the core areas of the Únětice Culture. Its composition reflects a deposition typical for the early Únětice Culture, consisting of a variety of elements of costume and jewelry.

All the objects, that is, a triangular dagger, two arm spirals, a larger ornamented disc, two smaller discs with studs, a knot-headed pin, a Cypriot pin, a Horkheimer pin, two Ösenrings, two other rings, 31 spiral tubes, eleven amber beads, seven lock rings and a slotted blade, had been buried in a jar (Coblenz 1986: 38–44; Fig. 4.1). The hoard dates to the Phase Reinecke Bz A1, roughly around 2000 BC. Based on its composition, Werner Coblenz interpreted the hoard as part of a rich woman's costume (*ibid*.: 44–45).

Most of the objects are typical of the EBA in Central Germany. Only the slotted blade is an anomaly in the region, a unique find north of the Alps. Nevertheless, parallels exist in Anatolia and the Eastern Mediterranean (*ibid*.: 68–69; Gerloff 1993: 73; 2010: 608–609; Maran 1998: 446–447; Fig. 4.2). While all the blades share the slotting, they can be distinguished by their form, mainly based on the design of the tang: either a thin and bent so-called 'rat-tail tang', or a broader tang. While the former is most notably

present in Anatolia, the latter was primarily present in the Aegean, first and foremost on the Cyclades (Renfrew 1967: 10; Gerloff 1993: 73). The Kyhna example resembles most closely Renfrew's type IIc (Renfrew 1967: 10, pl. 7, IIc), with two blades from Amorgos showing the closest parallels (Coblenz 1986: 68; Gerloff 1993: 73; 2010: 609–610; Fig. 4.3). Gerloff proposes a chronological allocation in the Phase Troy II-Late, respectively Early Helladic II. She correlates this dating with the Middle European Phase Reinecke Bz A1 (Gerloff 1993: 74). Maran (1998: 447) emphasizes that precise dating is difficult and therefore dates the spearheads between the second half of Early Helladic II and the Middle Helladic period. While the slotted blades seem to have been present earlier in the Aegean than in Kyhna, at least a brief chronological overlap between the two regions can be assumed (Gerloff 2010: 608–612).

Although the blades are sometimes described as Cycladic daggers, they are more commonly seen as spearheads (Gerloff 1993: 73; a reconstruction of a possible way of fixation can be found in Childe 1925: fig. 21). Their general recognition as spearheads stresses an interesting aspect of the example from Kyhna. Spearheads are found to have been regularly present in Central Europe after 2000 BC, becoming more common at the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age. Furthermore, they are fixed by means of a socket. While the typological similarities suggest that the spearhead was transferred from the Aegean to Central Germany, proving a possible adoption of functions and values is more difficult. The insights mainly come from a consideration and comparison of the contexts in both Central Germany and the Aegean.

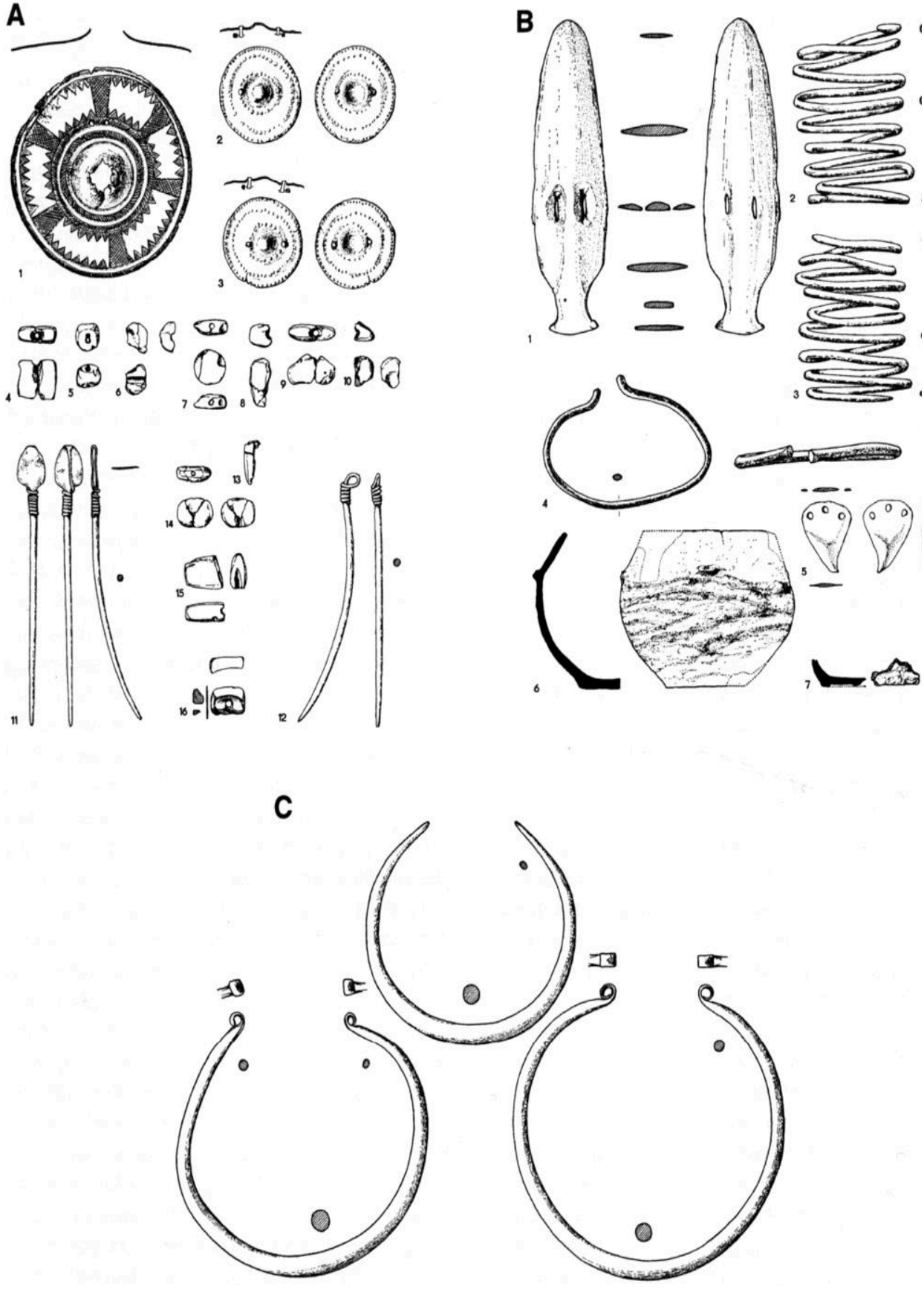

A
B
C

Fig. 4.1: Content of the hoard from Kyhna, Saxony. Atypical for the Únětice Culture are the slotted blade (B1), the Horkheimer pin (A11) and the ornamented disc (A1) (Krause 2003: fig. 222).

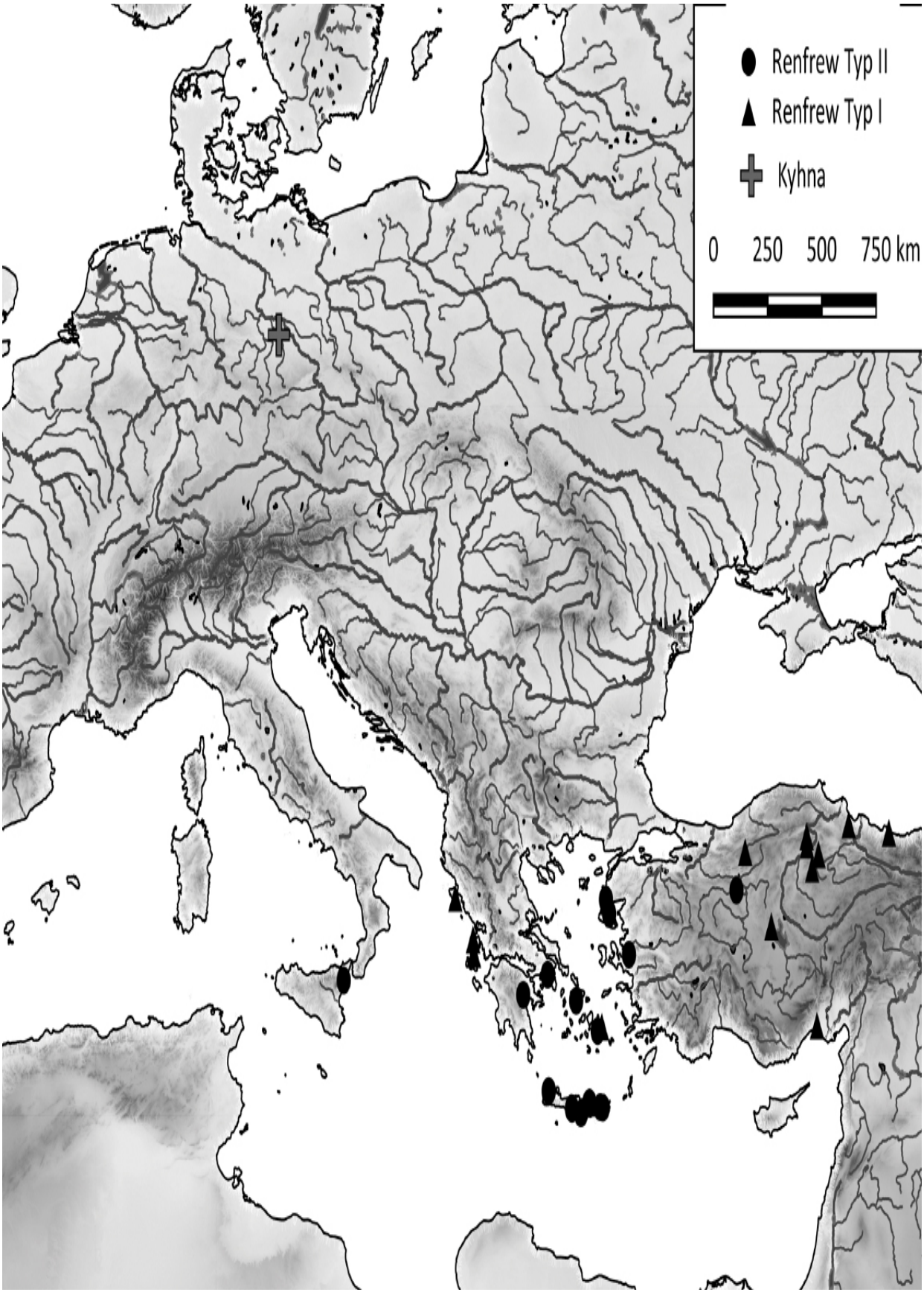

Renfrew Typ II
Renfrew Typ I
Kyhna
0 250 500 750 km

Fig. 4.2: Distribution of spearheads with slotted blades: • with broad tangs and ▲ with rat-tail tang (based on material by Natural Earth Data).

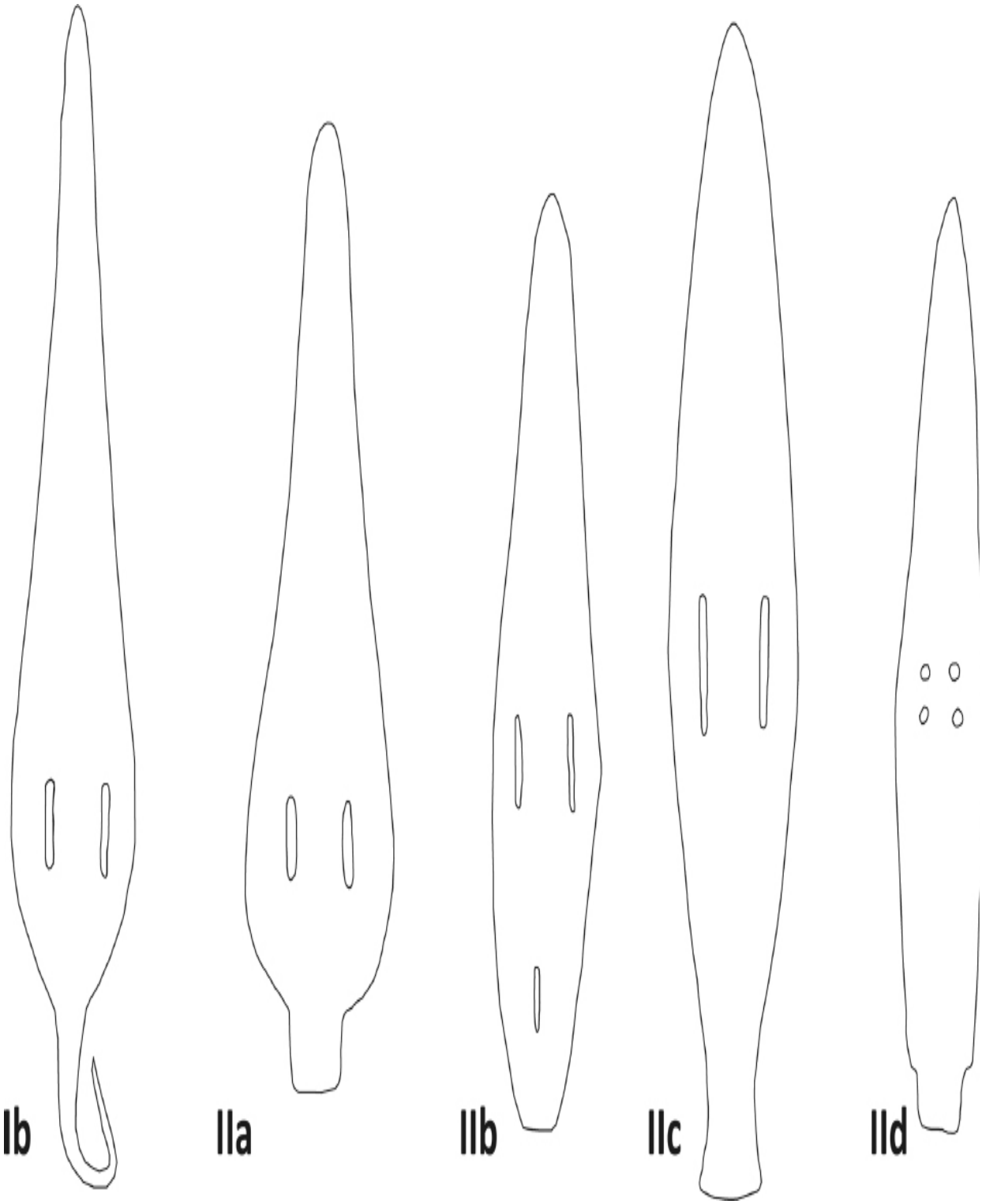


Fig. 4.3: Different types of slotted spearheads in the Aegean and Anatolia, following Renfrew's (1967) typology.

In the Eastern Mediterranean, slotted blades are found in graves and hoards. The undocumented contexts for almost half the slotted blades present problems. Within the remaining group, the documentation of find contexts varies in quality. Nevertheless, it can be said that most of the remaining spearheads originate from graves in both the Aegean and Anatolia. As far as documented, the graves belong to the richer groups within the cemeteries. For example, the example from Grave 14 at Dokathismata, Amorgos, Cyclades, was found together with two idols and two vessels, all made from marble, and a dagger with silver pins and pottery (Gerloff 1993: 93; Rambach 2000: 10–12, tab. 2,2–5, 13,1–3). As well as in graves, slotted blades are present in two hoards from the Aegean and three from Anatolia, two of which are present at Troy alone. *Treasure K* contains one, while *Treasure A*, the so-called Priam's treasure, contains seven spearheads (Gerloff 1993: 92–93). So far, the contexts seem to suggest an association with the richer and possibly higher ranking members of the society, these objects possibly serving as both weapons, whether for fighting or hunting, and as a means to express status and prestige. Again, it must be stressed that the situation with the documentation makes a clear assertion of an Eastern Mediterranean origin complicated, a rough sketch rather than a clear picture.

For the Central German blade, the situation is better. Despite the presence of this one foreign object, the composition of the hoard from Kyhna is well within the spectrum of the Únětice Culture. Most of the objects are typical for this group. Only the Horkheimer pin and the ornamented disc are unusual, indicating a connection to the southern German Alpine foothills. In general, the Kyhna hoard fits the developing hoard practice of the Central German EBA in Central Germany well. From the beginning of this period, two main types of hoards become more and more common: hoards mainly composed of elements of dress, mainly Ösenrings and arm spirals, and hoards mostly composed of weapons, primarily axes and less commonly daggers, *Stabdolche* (halberds) and double axes (Meller 2013: 519). From a chronological perspective, the jewelry hoards represent the beginning of Únětice hoard practice and are dated to Phase A1b of the EBA, roughly at the end of the twenty-first century BC. During the following phase, A2a,

hoards containing only jewelry or weapons, as well as mixtures of both, become more widespread and prominent. During Phase A2b, covering the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries BC, the tradition of hoards rapidly declines, coming to an end at the transition between the Early and Middle Bronze Ages (Meller 2013: 518–519; Lorenz 2013). Through its early dating to Phase A1b, as well as its general composition, the Kyhna hoard fits the early tradition of depositions in Central Germany's Únětice Culture well, probably representing an above-average composition. Nevertheless, the presence of weaponry sets it apart from most of the early hoards, presenting an interesting aspect.

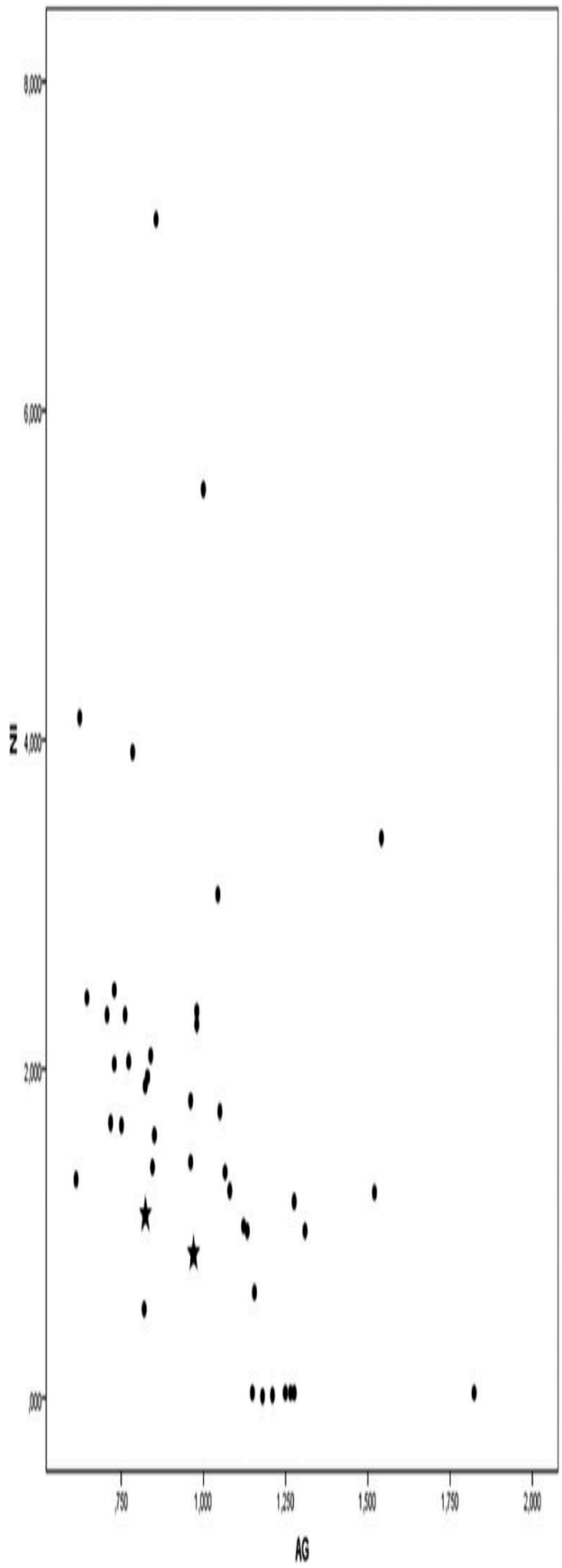
Traditionally, weaponry is limited to and associated with higher-ranking groups or individuals within the Únětice society. This hierarchical divide can be seen in the weapon hoards. The different kinds can be ranked from the more common axes to rarer daggers. At the apex are the *Stabdolche*, present primarily in the largest hoards.[2] While this divide does not necessarily reflect and define social structures or reality, a similar segmentation can be observed in the graves themselves, as well as in the composition of funerary objects. While most graves contain no or only a few goods, some are richer, containing more and more bronze objects, starting with pins and followed by axes and daggers. The construction of the graves further underlines the hierarchical distinction. While most graves were flat graves, individuals with the richest inventories were buried under grave mounds, resulting in the so-called *Fürstengräber*, which often contain gold jewelry and weapons (Meller 2014: 628–637, fig. 18).

Both the graves and the hoards are commonly understood as ways for individuals or certain groups within the society to express their status and prestige. Certain assemblages of jewelry and weaponry and their incorporation into one's clothing expressed one's position within the hierarchical system. Especially in the case of weapons, there seems to have been a strict limitation and ranking within the graves that might have been reflected in the hoards themselves. Given the evidence of full attire, including an amber necklace, but also the dagger and the slotted blade, foreshadowing the role of weapons in slightly younger graves and hoards,

the Kyhna hoard should be understood as being that of an individual or group of individuals of higher status and prestige.

As already noted, spearheads can be associated with the upper 'classes' of society in both Central Germany and the Aegean, being used to aid or express their prestige and social status. It is tempting to see a direct transfer of function as both a weapon and a symbol of status, but this assumption has several shortcomings. For one, it ignores the fact that, in both regions, bronze as a material, as well as weapons, are generally associated with persons of higher status and prestige, as in most European regions during the late third and early second millennia BC. Furthermore, neither Central Germany nor the Mediterranean show any direct or indirect evidence of contact during the EBA, except for the object from Kyhna. A transfer of immaterial values attached to a certain object is highly improbable, especially over such great distances. A loss of the object's original values and functions and its re-contextualization within the Únětice Culture is more probable and is supported by the archaeological evidence.

When comparing the working of the blade from Kyhna with the working of the Aegean blades, the Central German exemplar appears much rougher. Its form is clumsier, and it appears unrefined. For example, the blade from Saxony still shows clear signs of the forging, especially in the areas of the slots. Here, a clear displacement of material due to the hammering of the slots can be seen in the edge. Furthermore, the edge shows no grinding at all, and the tip is rounded. This, and the lack of any sign of use, suggest that it was not actually used as a practical weapon. All in all, the object appears unfinished and sloppy compared to those from the Eastern Mediterranean. Furthermore, the Kyhna blade differs significantly from the Mediterranean spearheads in its metal composition (Krause 2003: 245, fig. 223, p. 247). At the same time, most of the Central German hoard has a very homogeneous composition, including the slotted blade (Fig. 4.4). Only two Ösenrings differ in the metal analyses. The used metal is a so-called *Fahlerz*, with high amounts of trace elements typical for the Únětice Culture (*ibid*.: 247). Both aspects indicate a local imitation rather than an import.[3]


8,000
6,000
4,000
2,000
,000
,750
1,000
1,250
1,500
1,750
2,000
AG

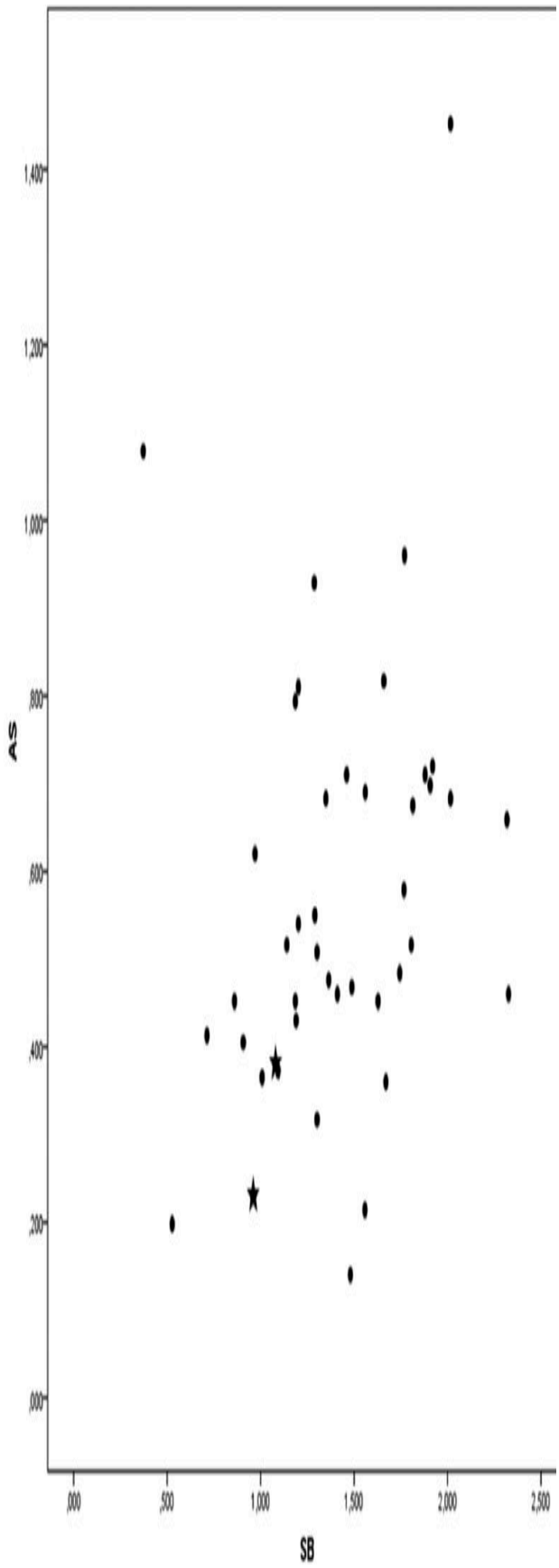

1,400
1,200
1,000
800
600
400
200
,000
,000
,500
1,000
1,500
2,000
2,500
SB

Fig. 4.4: Metal composition of the hoard from Kyhna, Saxony in Ag/Ni- and As/Sb-Diagrams. The spearhead is marked with stars.

It therefore appears that the object itself was not imported, but rather the idea of the object. This implies two things. First, the idea had to be introduced by someone who had seen and thus knew about spearheads, not necessarily their possible meanings and values, but at least their basic form and look. To get to know spearheads, this person had to travel some distance, taking into account the lack of similar objects in Central Europe and the Balkans. Secondly, the blade must have been understood in the local Únětice community, at least to some degree. Otherwise, its local manufacturing, and especially its integration into one's own material culture, as well as into the developing tradition of hoards, would most likely not have been possible. It is important to emphasize that in this case 'understood' is not necessarily the same as knowing and using the same values as in the Eastern Mediterranean, but rather having the ability to accept foreign influences and ideas and to incorporate them into one's own cultural setting through the process of appropriation (Stockhammer 2012: 107). In the present case, the rise of weaponry in Únětice hoards seems to be a key element. As stated above, weapons seem to have had a connection with the status of their owners and bearers. Especially daggers and *Stabdolche* most likely served not only as weapons, but also as symbols for and expression of the wielder's status within EBA communities. In this case, the spearhead could have been treated and understood in the same way as other weapons. The value system of the Central German Únětice communities appears to have been flexible enough to allow atypical objects to be appropriated and connected to established norms and values. At the same time, long-term integration and repeated local reproduction did not occur, suggesting that the impact of the concept of slotted blades was slight or only brief. While it was accepted, it was not incorporated into the local material traditions, as other and more established weapons existed with the same functions. If and to what extent the foreign character of the spearhead was important is hard to say based solely on the archaeological evidence. Local imitation of a foreign object, as well as its integration into the local practice of depositions, might indicate a conscious decision and a desire to own and show off an artifact with a foreign character or even a connection to distant places. Nevertheless, any assumption of an

object being valued through its foreignness, or even the connection of the object and its owner to travelling and ‘otherness’ (Kristiansen and Larsson 2005: 32–61), is lost in the archaeological evidence. We cannot even be sure to what extent the slotted blade was perceived as foreign, especially when it was made by local craftsmen from local material.

The slotted blade from Kyhna stresses aspects and possibilities of an immaterial exchange and the dealing with foreign objects. However, it also shines light on several problems. While unique foreign objects regularly highlight the possibility of long-distance exchange and interaction, they only represent a snapshot of the individual reactions of communities and persons to them. These reactions depend greatly on the existing cultural background and existing local traditions. Thus, the dealing can differ vastly between regions and periods of time. While certain aspects, like a local reworking, imitation or integration into the local material traditions, can be observed on a regular basis, an overarching common pattern is hard to determine. Rather than relying on a general rule, each unique foreign object must be examined and understood separately and on its own. And while a thorough examination can hint at certain ways in which a foreign object might have been treated, concrete evidence of a transfer of immaterial values attached to this object remains sketchy at best.

Ornamented discs in Central and Southern Germany

A better situation is presented by objects that have a ‘foreign’ origin, but also a more regular appearance in the material culture. Through their broader spread, it is possible to observe the repeated trade and the manner of their appropriation. Again, the hoard from Kyhna in Saxony provides a point of origin. As already described, the hoard contained a Horkheimer pin and an ornamented disc.[4] Both show clear links to the southern German Alpine foothills. The Horkheimer pin’s main areas of distribution are southern Baden-Wuerttemberg and Straubing, Bavaria (Krause 1988: 70–76, where they are found primarily in graves.

For purposes of the present discussion, the ornamented discs will be examined in more detail. Further discs occur in the whole territory of the Únětice Culture, that is, in Central Germany, Bohemia, Moravia and Austria,

and the northern peripheries, as well as in the Bavarian Staudinger group of the southern German EBA,[5] mainly in the region around Staudinger and in the Lech Valley (Coblenz 1985: 122; Ruckdeschel 1978: 172; Fig. 4.5). On average, the discs measure 12 cm in diameter, fixed with either punched holes or eyelets, and have an ornamented front. Several concentric circles are engraved around a central stud. These circles can be filled with strokes or clusters of strokes, herringbone patterns or stroke-filled triangles. Ornamented and undecorated zones alternate (Coblenz 1986: 49–60; Ruckdeschel 1978: 173–174). Following Werner Coblenz, four different types can be determined, based on stylistic differences (Coblenz 1986: 47–60; Fig. 4.6). Of these types, type 3 is the most common, being found throughout the whole area of distribution. The other three types can only be found in one region each and must be understood as local variations, as can be seen in Figure 4.5. For the Bavarian discs, Ruckdeschel (1978: 174) pointed out that the same ornamentation, especially vertical bands of lines and lines with bilateral triangles, are found on southern German disc-headed pins of the Heroldingen type, suggesting local manufacture. A similar observation can be made for the ornamented discs in Lower Austria and Moravia. Here, the motives on the discs resemble the ornamentation on the Boroticer arm cuffs, which are limited to these regions (Hesse 2013: 226).

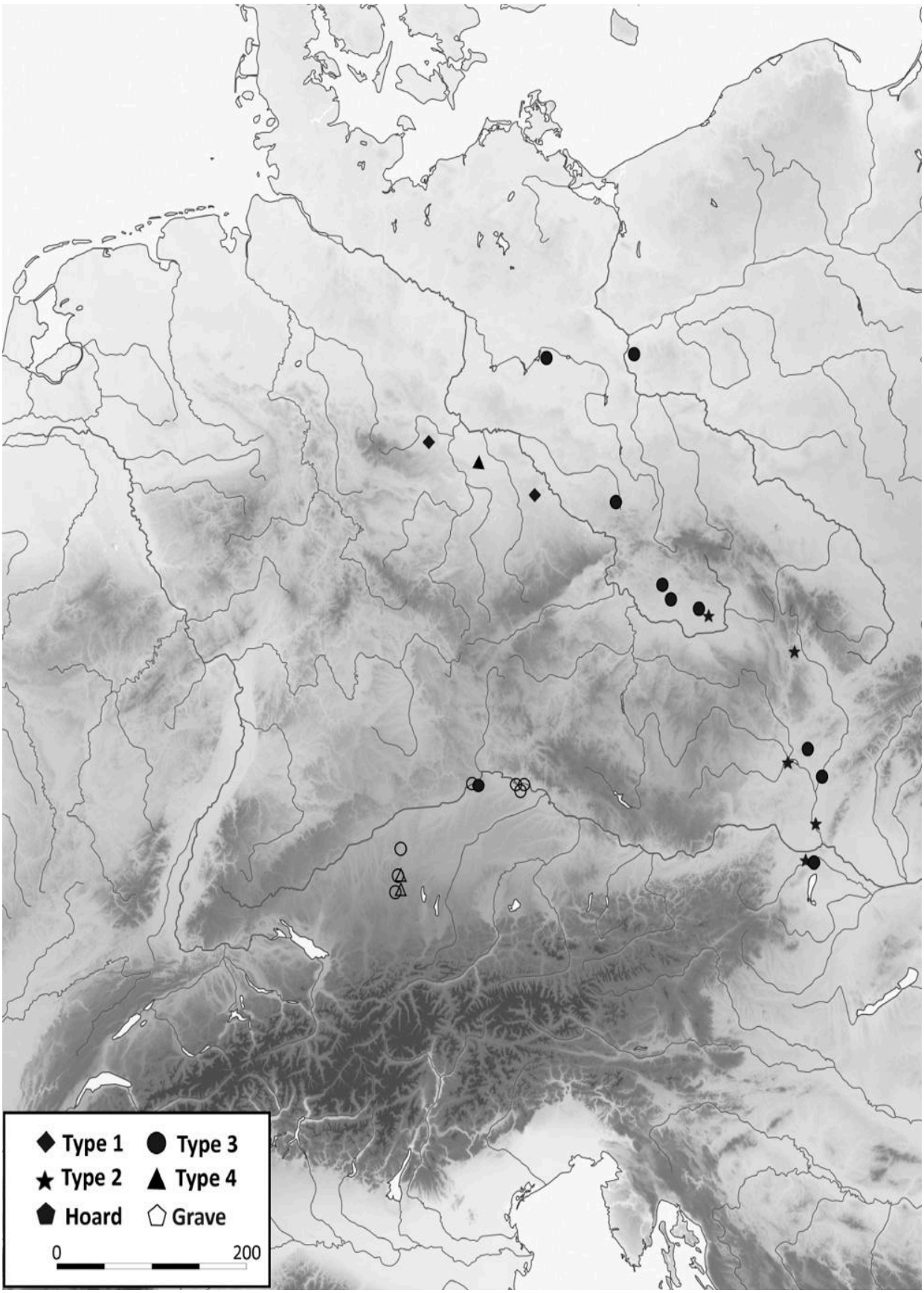

Type 1
Type 3
Type 2
Type 4
Hoard
Grave
0
200

Fig. 4.5: Distribution of ornamented discs (based on material by Natural Earth Data).

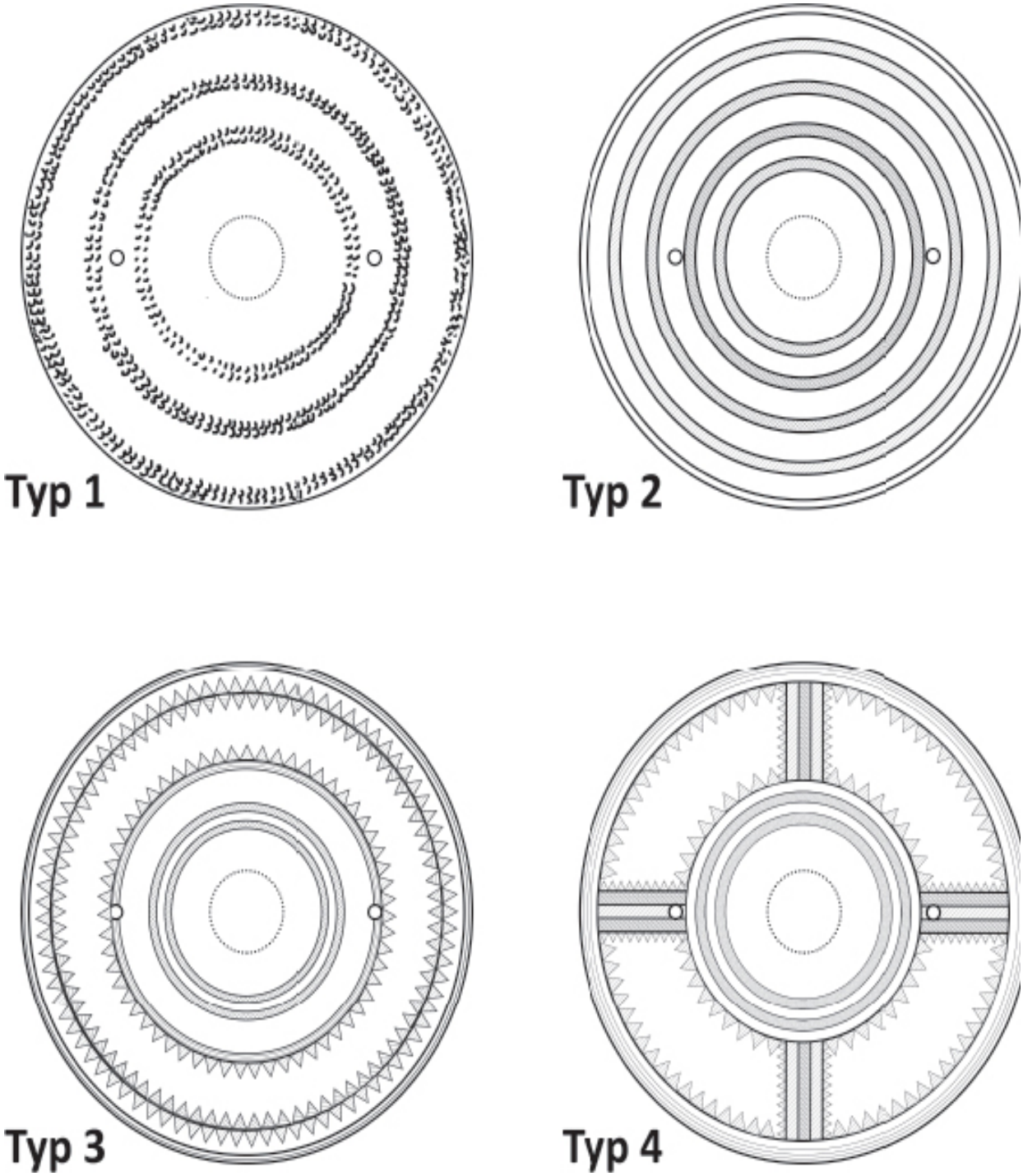


Fig. 4.6: Different types of ornamented discs.

In the case of the Únětice Culture, the ornamented discs date back to the EBA Phase A2. The Bavarian discs are commonly dated slightly earlier,

belonging to the previous phase A1b. The chronology suggests an origin in Southern Germany, with its spread to and adoption by the Únětice Culture (Ruckdeschel 1978: 174–175). Furthermore, there seems to be only a small chronological overlap between the Bavarian and the Únětice discs. First and foremost, the early dating of the Kyhna hoard presents the best chronological simultaneity between Southern and Central Germany concerning the ornamented discs. In this context, the new, recently published radiocarbon dates for the Lech Valley made by Stockhammer, Pernicka and colleagues become significant (Stockhammer *et al.* 2015). Their study states that the established chronological system should be adjusted, at least in Southern Germany. Of great importance is the fact that typical Bz A1b types appear to have a much longer lifetimes than has been assumed up until now. The chronological sequence Bz A1b followed by Bz A2 is presented as no longer fitting the situation in the Lech Valley, nor probably the rest of Bavaria. Rather, Bz A1b and Bz A2 existed simultaneously. It is proposed that Bz A1 and Bz A2 are coexisting and are more of a differentiation between simple manufactured objects and highly complex, cast objects than a chronological separation (*ibid*.: 627–630). This would suggest a much greater chronological overlap between and coexistence of the ornamented discs of the Straubinger Group and the Únětice Culture.

The distinction seen in the typology appears much stronger when comparing the contexts in which the discs where found. In Bavaria, the majority were found in graves. Only two of the 17 discs in Southern Germany are an exception, as they originated from a hoard. In contrast to this situation, all 30 discs in the different Únětice regions were deposited in hoards. In both contexts, the ornamented discs normally appear in pairs. This corresponds with them being worn in pairs on the chest, as is suggested by their positions in the graves (Ruckdeschel 1978: 172; Coblenz 1986: 65). The distinction is further augmented by their respective associations with other objects. In the Únětice hoards, the ornamented discs are usually accompanied by rings and Ösenrings. In the Bavarian graves, the discs are found together with pins, spiral tubes and other jewelry, forming the attire of the buried. The contexts, as well as the anthropological examinations, point to female individuals (Ruckdeschel 1978: 172; Coblenz 1986: 65).

When comparing the contexts of the discs with each other, the division between Únětice and Straubing becomes clearly visible, but shows some important exceptions. Within the Únětice hoards, a separation appears, depending on the presence or absence of Ösenrings. Interestingly, the Bavarian hoard from Menning separates itself clearly from the other Bavarian finds, but fits surprisingly well within the Únětice contexts. While the appearance of discs in hoards is unique in Bavaria, the composition is as much the reason behind this separation.[6] While the presence of ornamented discs in a hoard is unique in Bavaria, the overall composition is well within the typical spectrum of EBA hoards in Southern Germany (David 2008; 2015). Furthermore, it must be emphasized that four Únětice hoards are much closer to the Bavarian inventories than to the other Únětice hoards. The depositions from Berlin-Lichtenrade (Gandert 1954; Coblenz 1986: 55) and Neudorf bei Staatz. Lower Austria, both contained arm cuffs and spiral finger rings, as well as pins, spiral tubes and other pieces of attire. In the case of the Neudorf hoard, the composition suggests the deposition of two full sets of costumes. The other two exceptional hoards are from Central Germany. One is the hoard from Kyhna, already discussed. Besides the ornamented disc, the Horkeheimer pin adds another connection to the pre-Alpine regions. With the exception of the weapons, the hoard loosely corresponds to the typical composition of a female costume, showing local mannerisms. The other atypical Central German hoard, found in Kiebitz (von Brunn 1959: 61), Saxony, is less salient then the other hoards discussed. It mostly contained different types of rings. It is set apart from the typical Únětice hoards with ornamented discs through the inclusion of arm spirals and an arm cuff, as well as an amber necklace. Overall, the composition includes parts of a costume, while at the same time resembling an assemblage of artifacts rather than a worn ensemble. Nevertheless, the necklace is noteworthy, as it resembles the amber necklace from Kyhna, as well as one found in a hoard from Halle-Quais, Saxony-Anhalt (Mattheußer 2003). Whereas these four hoards appear to consist of rich, wearable costumes, the other Únětice hoards show much less variation and appear more selective. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that the ornamented discs

were at some time part of a costume that was actually worn (Coblenz 1986: 65).

While the use of these objects seemingly remained unchanged, their contexts changed drastically between the Straubinger Group and the Únětice Culture. This might point to an alteration in the immaterial values attached to the ornamented discs. When looking at the overall cultural context, this impression must be relativized. The sharp difference in the forms of deposition can be traced back to the general variations in both funerary and hoarding practices. In the regions of the Únětice Culture, hoards are more common and much larger (Zich 1996: 34–37; Lauermann 2003: 524–527) than in the South German EBA (David 2015). At the same time, the greater number of the Únětice graves are 'poorer'. While rich graves like the *Fürstengräber* mentioned above are present, the usual inventories consisted of pottery and pins (Zich 1996: 16–31, 312–324; Bartelheim 1998: 160–167; Lauermann 2003: 500–523, whereas the graves of the Danubian EBA contained bronze objects on a more regular basis (Ruckdeschel 1978: 232–270; Krause 1988; Bertemes 1989; Neugebauer and Neugebauer 1997). The distinction is not only limited to the inventories, as it can be seen from the general funerary practices, which must be the reasons for the different forms of deposition for ornamented discs, rather than different values.

Insightful is the fact that, in Bavaria, all the discs from graves can be associated with female individuals. These graves contain individuals with some of the richest inventories in the burial sites. In particular, the grave from Schwabmünchen (Stolz 2013: 43–44). must be understood as one of the richest graves in the region. The more than 4,000 tin beads, sewn on a cape, alone represent enormous value for the EBA. The owner probably had high rank and social status within her community. Concerning Central Germany and Lower Austria, the four hoards from Berlin, Kyhna, Kiebitz and Neudorf suggest a similar association, as they also appear to contain rich female costumes. In particular, the amber necklaces from Kyhna and Kiebitz emphasize the high value of the deposited ensembles. The association with rich hoards and graves suggests that the ornamented discs were part of the costume of women of higher status and prestige and that they might have

served to express or punctuate their social standing in both the Únětice Culture, and the Lech valley and Straubing region.

The origins and directions of transfer of these objects have frequently been discussed. Ruckdeschel suggested a Bavarian origin based on the earlier chronological context in the graves (Ruckdeschel 1978: 174–175). The recently published radiocarbon dates indicate that this theory might be wrong, reopening the question of the origin yet again. The connection with the female costume might hint at a joint movement between the two cultural groups. This would mean that the discs did not move 'on their own', but were carried by women as part of their dress and introduced by them in the new setting, whether in the Straubing group or the Únětice Culture. A similar phenomenon was described by A. Jockenhöfel for the Middle Bronze Age in West Germany. By examining and comparing female costumes, especially headdresses, he was able to trace the movements of women, some of whom had both local objects and objects originating in neighbouring regions as funerary objects. Jockenhöfel argued that these foreign women (*fremde Frauen*) combined local elements with pieces of costumes typical of their native region. He describes this phenomenon as an indication of exogamy. Through the combination of original, native and new local costumes, the women could both express their affiliation to their new homes and retain and express a connection to their old homes (Jockenhöfel 1991: 51, 52–58, 60). A similar situation might have occurred during the EBA in the Straubinger Group and the Únětice regions, leading to a combination of foreign and established elements in the making of costumes. The development of local varieties in the ornamentation indicates that the discs were integrated into and adapted to the local canon of elements of costume, not being limited to 'foreign' women, but also involving local women.

As far as the archaeological evidence goes, function and meaning were unchanged in all regions. Two factors have probably aided the seamlessness of the process of integration. Despite significant cultural differences in both immaterial and material culture, all the regions that had ornamented discs appear to be culturally close. Both the Straubinger Group and the Únětice Culture developed from a common Chalcolithic basis and used similar objects like daggers or axes in similar fashions.[7] Thus, a basic understanding

of each other and a common basis in exchange was most likely involved. Another factor aiding the easy transfer of ornamented discs might have been the bearers. If not only the objects, but also the women, travelled between regions, they could transport and communicate immaterial values much more easily.

Conclusion

Both groups of objects discussed here show, in an exemplary manner, how 'foreign' objects could have been dealt with during the EBA. In the case of the Mediterranean spearhead found at Kyhna, it was shown how objects with a long-distance connection could have been received and integrated into both the local material culture and its general cultural framework. In this process, original values and functions were lost and replaced. Rather than a simple transfer or diffusion, it seems much more appropriate to consider a translation. The assumption of diffusion suggests a simple process of spreading in which the receiving groups can only decide to transmit or reject the original ideas. With translation, the action lies much more with the recipients, enabling them to form and change the meaning of objects through their actions and reception, rather than being limited to the initial attributes (Maran 2013: 161). The appropriation and local reworking seen in the spearhead appear in other objects as well. Rather than being direct imports, they were more often locally reworked or imitated. Helle Vandkilde (2014, 603) coins the term 'creative translation' for artifacts 'that were neither imports nor truly indigenous by tradition'. She uses the term fittingly to describe the combination of local and foreign traits, most particularly form, decoration and material, but also to emphasize that these artifacts were not direct transplants, but rather required reworking and adoption to fit into the local traditions (*ibid*.: 604). Especially over long distances, this might have led to a complete loss of the original meaning, as abstract concepts are unable to travel as fast as objects and often change in the process. Another example of the change and appropriation of 'foreign' objects is amber in Mycenaean shaft graves (Maran 2013), which typologically resembles the amber spacer beads of the British Wessex Culture. Joseph Maran showed that, while the form was not altered, or only slightly, the function changed.

In Britain, amber was worn solely as necklaces and found in female graves, whereas in Mycenaean Greece the same forms of amber beads were found both in male and female graves. And while they could still have been worn as necklaces after the Wessex fashion, they were more often combined with other materials (*ibid*.:, 151–152, 158–159), or seemed to be worn in different fashions, as, for example, a shoulder belt in the Tholos Tomb A at Kakovatos (*ibid*.: 152–158). Across shorter distances, the picture changes to a certain degree. Meanings and values have a much greater chance of being transferred together with objects, as shown by the example of ornamented discs. And while the potential to transfer immaterial values is much higher, the artifacts are still subject to a creative translation, as implied by the different local ornamentations and their connection to established local styles. This pattern can be observed with most 'foreign' or 'creative translated' objects: a long distance hinders a transfer of values, whereas a shorter, more regular connection aids in achieving a relatively unchanged integration. It should be stressed that, while general tendencies can be observed, the exact process and results differ from case to case.

Notes

1. In this context, 'foreign' is used from a modern, archaeological point of view to describe objects that are uncommon in the typical material spectrum of the materials from a culture or region. While these objects show a link to or origin in other regions, they were often either locally produced or reworked.
2. According to Meller, the ratio between daggers/*Stabdolche* and axes is roughly 1:20; Meller 2013: 519–520.
3. The idea of an imitation rather than an import was both mentioned by Gerloff and Krause. While the former left the social implications untouched, Krause connected it to the possible origins of new metallurgic technologies and innovations in the Únětice Culture (Gerloff 1993: 73; Krause 2003: 247).
4. Coblenz assumed that originally the hoard contained a pair of discs. As the preserved disc lay at the topmost point of the hoard, the other one

probably decayed or was destroyed shortly before the discovery of the hoard (Coblenz 1986: 37).

5. The terminology differs among authors. Other terms are *Danubian Bronze Age* or *cultural complex* and the *Nordalpiner Blechkreis* from E. Vogt. Recently, S. Möslein stressed that the Straubinger Group is a regional variation of the Northern Alpine complex rather than an independent group (Vogt 1948; Möslein 2001).
6. Schütze-Tillmann and Tillmann (1994: 55–56) date the Menninger hoard back to the transition from Bz A1 to Bz A2, whereas W. David (2015: 88) dates it back to the developed EBA, Phase Bz A2a.
7. For the Corded Ware Culture, among other objects, axes, jewellery and beakers are seen as funerary objects, indicating the higher status of the deceased (Strahm 2002: 179–183). Similarly, the Bell Beaker Culture used daggers, jewellery and beakers as means to express the status of the buried individual (*ibid*.: 183–186). The same basic concepts occur in graves of the Únětice Culture and the Danubian Bronze Age, only in different, but more 'developed' types (*ibid*.:, 186–188).

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Chapter 5

Crates and crates of *sigillata*? The supply of Italic *terra sigillata* to Roman military camps

Thomas Hahn

Italic *terra sigillata*

The aim of this chapter is to explore a specific market situation at a time when the production sites of a particular commodity were located far away from its consumers. It examines the importance of the development of military camps in the Rhine valley at the end of the first century BC for the production of Italic *terra sigillata*. It is also important to investigate how *terra sigillata* came to this region from its production sites in Italy, the extent to which it was used there by Roman soldiers, and its impact on the local population.

Terra sigillata is a high-quality ceramic used throughout the Roman Empire (for the distribution of *terra sigillata*, see Mees 2011). Special features of *terra sigillata*, which distinguish it from other kinds of ceramics, are its bright red colour, glossy coating and characteristic spectrum of types. This is upmarket tableware. The shine and the red colour result from the immersion of the vessel in finely sifted clay and then its burning in special, sophisticated kilns at a high temperature. The investigation of *terra sigillata* has enjoyed a high priority in Roman archaeology. Since the vessel's shapes changed with changes in fashion, *terra sigillata* is of particular interest with regard to dating (Bernhard 2000: 138). A distinction can be made between plain and decorated ware. The most common forms include cups for sauces,

side dishes and plates on which foodstuffs were served (a typology can be found in Ettlinger *et al.* 1990; Fig. 5.1).

Goblets, which were used to serve wine, were the most common form of decorated ware. The relief-decorated *sigillata* mostly had its own world of images, which, as individual forms of *sigillata*, has similarities with contemporaneous silver vessels. Dionysian scenes, appropriate to the use of these chalices, were a popular decorative element. The relief-decorated *sigillata* were produced by throwing the vessels into molds in which the desired decor was pressed with punches in the negative.

The earliest instances of Italic *sigillata* production date back to a few production centres in Italy (in particular, Arezzo and Pisa) and to Lyons in the Rhône Valley (Fig. 5.2). In fact, Arezzo, where *terra sigillata* was produced from the third quarter of the first century BC, was of particular importance as a production site. Vessels from Arezzo were exported to the entire Mediterranean region and to the northwest of the Roman Empire. In fact, among the northwestern provinces Arezzo was replaced as the main production site by Pisa around the turn of the period, after which short-lived workshops in Gallic Lugdunum/Lyons temporarily dominated the market in the Rhine region.

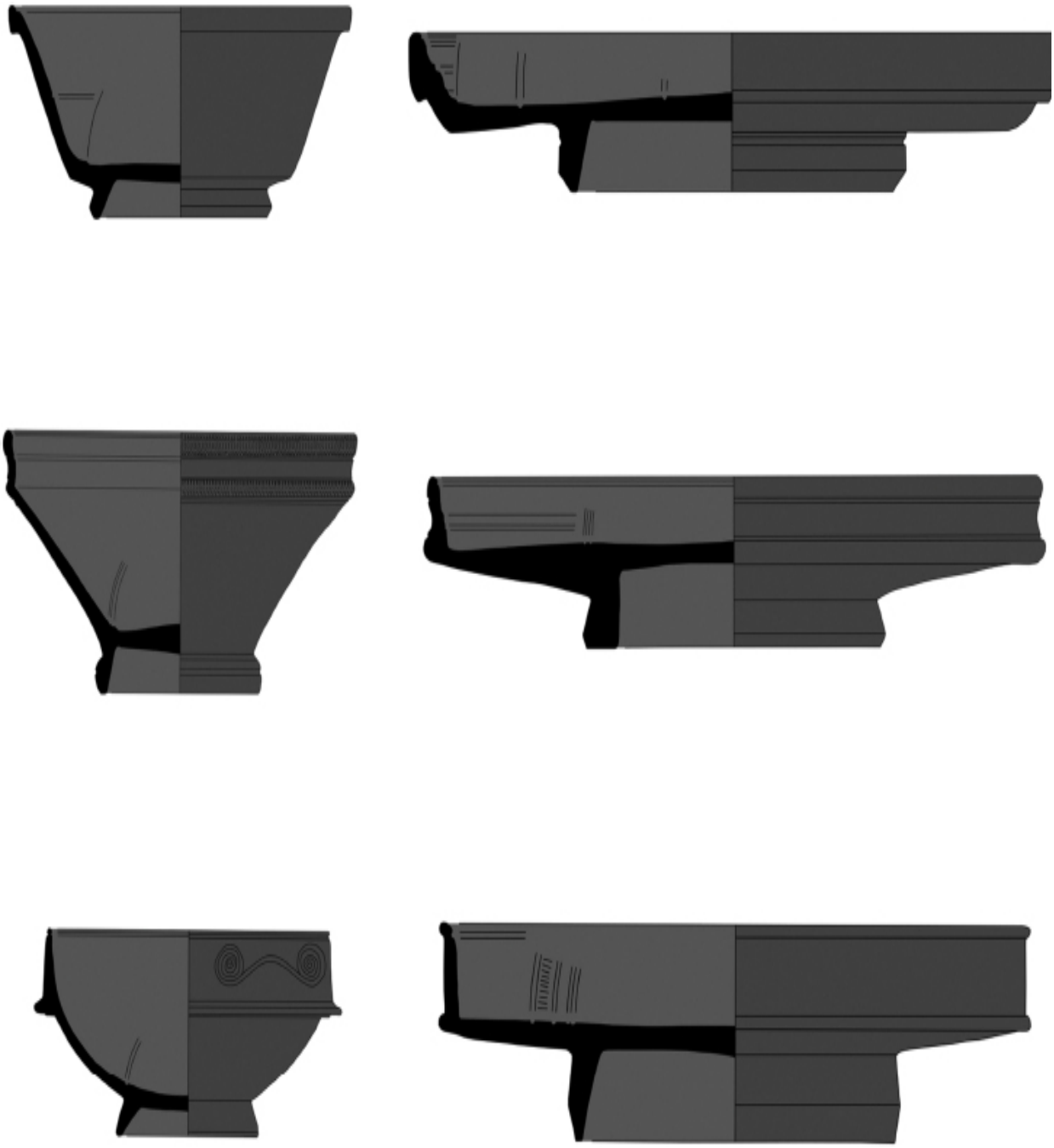


Fig. 5.1: Typical forms Augustan terra sigillata *(drawing by the author).*

The Arezzo workshops, which were developed in the late first century BC, must be seen as large enterprises for their time. There was a marked division of labour, and slaves were also used in some of these workshops. Unlike small family potteries, these workshops could generate high quantities. One of the largest entrepreneurs was Cn. Ateius, who also

produced *terra sigillata* in Pisa and Lyons. Most of these vessels were stamped inside on the bottom (Fig. 5.3). Owing to excellent research, it is now possible to date most of these stamps and assign them to a site of production. To this end, a comprehensive corpus of stamps is available that contains all known types. The stamps have been dated to particular periods, and a determination of their origin is provided if possible (Oxé *et al.* 2000). However, this method causes difficulties in the case of the stamps of potters like Ateius, who produced *sigillata* at different locations. Our knowledge of the production sites is sometimes inadequate. In Arezzo, for example, we are largely dependent on the results of excavations carried out in the nineteenth century (*ibid.*: 25–36). In this context, the application of a geochemical analysis would be useful that could clearly pinpoint the production sites.

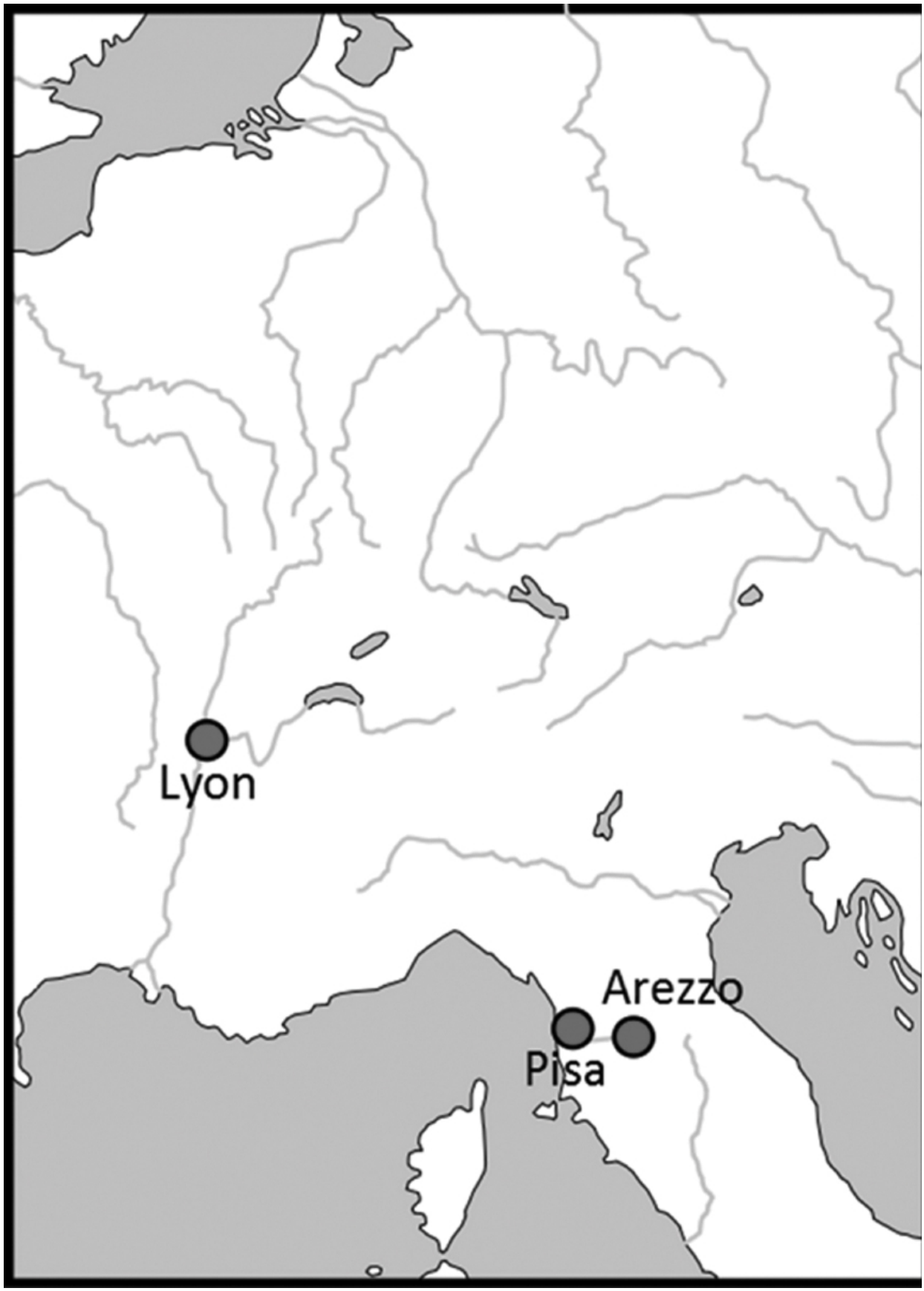

Lyon
Arezzo
Pisa

Fig. 5.2: Map of the main production sites of Italic terra sigillata *(map by the author).*

The Augustan period

Terra sigillata appeared at a time of political and social upheaval. With the victory of Octavian (later the Emperor Augustus) in 30 BC, a long phase of civil wars came to an end. This was accompanied by a profound transformation of Roman society. There were repeated changes within the rank and file of the ruling class at Rome. The so-called *homines novi*, who acquired great wealth, claimed affiliation to the Roman upper class. At the same time old families lost their influence, and freedmen started to win growing social importance. A particularly striking example of such a parvenu is provided by the figure of Trimalchio by the writer Petronius (Petronius, *Satyricon*).



Fig. 5.3: Example of a potter stamp of Ateius (photo by the author, private collection).

In the subsequent Augustan period, Italy and the provinces of the Roman Empire experienced a period of peace. After new cities had already been founded in Gaul under Caesar, a previously unprecedented wave of urbanization began during the reign of Augustus.[1] Especially under Agrippa, the right-hand man of Augustus, the road network was expanded (Lepelley 2001: 159f). New roads and bridges were built and milestones set up. New social classes with considerable purchasing power evolved in these cities. Hence, there was a real consumer revolution in Augustan times (Woolf 1998: 169ff.; Wallace-Hadrill 2010: 315ff). The spread of *terra sigillata* must be seen in this context.

The Roman army and *terra sigillata* in the Rhine region

This chapter examines more closely the regions on the left and right banks of the Rhine between 20 BC and the end of the reign of Augustus in AD 14, and accordingly outlines the occurrence of *sigillata* in these areas. During 15–13 BC, when the provincialization of Gaul and the development of infrastructure were being pursued, Augustus stayed in Lyons, the capital of the Gallic provinces. Numerous large military camps with thousands of soldiers emerged along the Rhine during this period, including in Mainz, Neuss, Xanten, Bonn and Nijmegen (Fig. 5.4). The military component was absolutely dominant in these areas in the Augustan period. Important civil settlements emerged later, when Italic *sigillata* had already been displaced.

The military garrisons were employed not only to secure the border, but also for the planned conquest of the area on the right bank of the Rhine and the establishment of the province of *Germania*. Thus, military camps, such as the one at Haltern, were also set up in this area. Even the foundations of a civilian town have been detected in central Hessian Waldgirmes (Becker and Rasbach 2015). However, the conquest ended as a result of the defeat of the Roman commander Varus in AD 9. Massive military sites were created in sparsely populated areas within a short time, which offered space for two Roman legions, or about 10,000 soldiers. A double legionary fortress was built, for example, in Mainz.

In the garrison towns, provincial auxiliary soldiers were stationed alongside the legions. Since only Roman citizens were able to serve in the legions during the Augustan period, the legionaries originally came from the Mediterranean region. The map displayed in Figure 5.5 shows the regions of origin of the legionaries stationed in Mainz, as far as is known from epigraphic evidence. It shows a clear focus on northern Italy. The Mediterranean legionnaires brought familiar food habits from their homeland to the Rhine, which they wanted to maintain even when away from home. They needed certain food items, such as wine, olive oil and fish sauces, along with the familiar tableware, namely *terra sigillata*.

Both legionaries and auxiliary soldiers received regular pay. According to written sources from the Augustan period, an ordinary legionary was paid ten asses a day (Tacitus: *Annals* 1.17.4.; Speidel 1992). The concentration of thousands of people with a regular income in areas that had been only sparsely populated just a short while ago eventually led to an increase in purchasing power and a class of consumers. This represents an unprecedented market situation in the Rhine region (von Kaenel 2012: 153f).

Unfortunately, we have no further information about the price of *terra sigillata* in the Augustan period. However, to obtain an idea of the possible price relationship, a *terra sigillata* bowl from Lezoux, dated to the second half of the second century AD, will be examined (Noll 1972). This bowl was found in Flavia Solvia in southeast Noricum in present-day Austria. It carries a long graffito on the bottom of the foot rim with the words *panna Verecundaes empta viges*, or ‘bowl of Verecunda, bought for twenty (asses)’. In the latter half of the second century, the pay of a Roman soldier was around 16 asses a day. The price of a bowl therefore exceeded the daily income of a Roman soldier, meaning that such bowls were reserved for better earners. Whether similar price ratios also applied during the early period of the Roman Empire has remained unclear, though it is quite possible. In addition to the chronological difference, the comparison is hampered by the fact that this second-century relief-decorated *sigillata* bowl is larger than Augustan cups and plates, and that it originated from another production site.

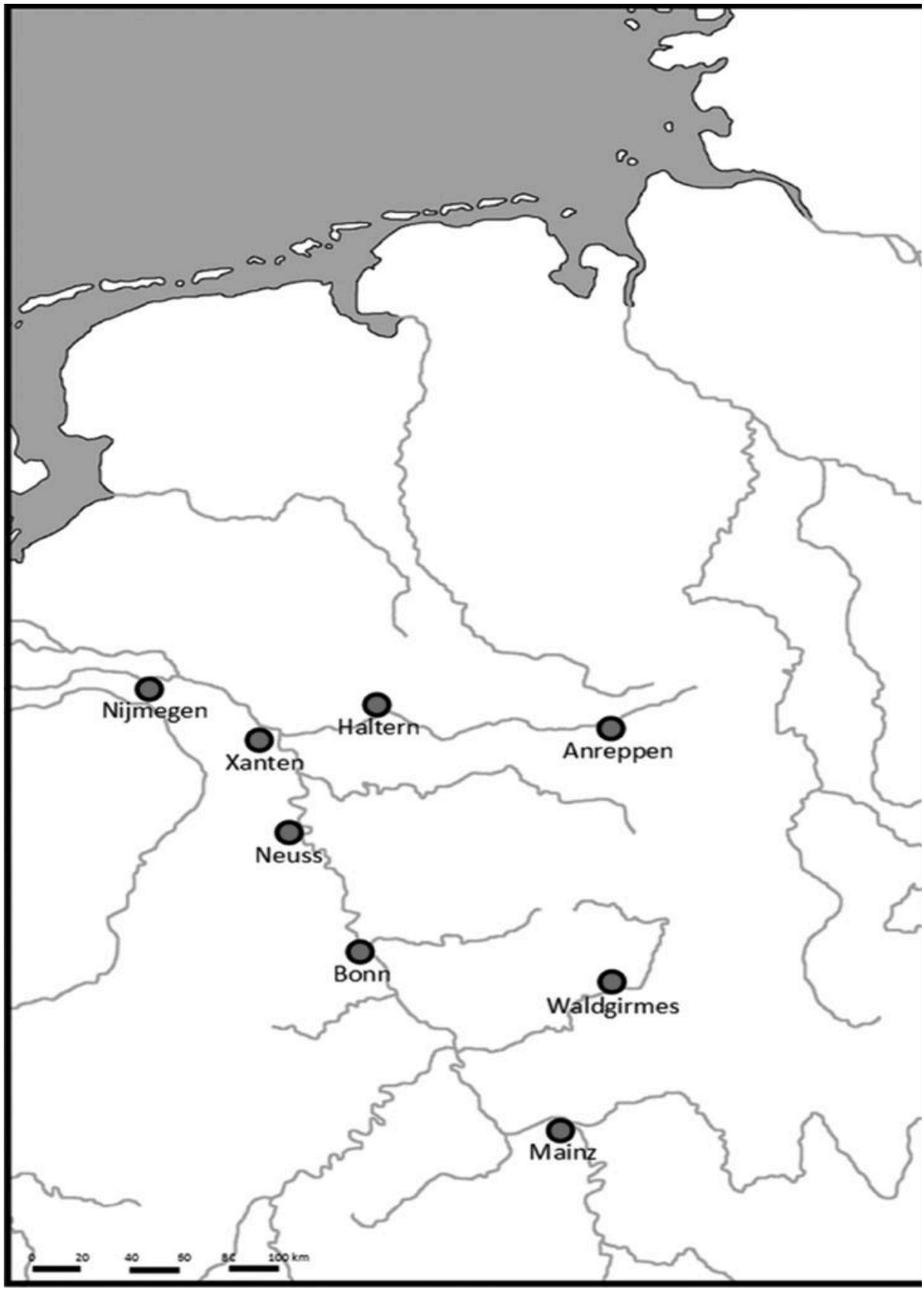

Nijmegen
Haltern
Xanten
Anreppen
Neuss
Bonn
Waldgirmes
Mainz
0 20 40 60 80 100 km

Fig. 5.4: Map of the most important early Roman sites in the Rhine region (map by the author).


Mogontiacum

Fig. 5.5: Map of the places of origin of the Roman soldiers from Mainz (map by the author).

In general, Roman soldiers were housed in camps with very limited space. Eight men formed a so-called *contubernium*, sharing small areas within the barracks consisting of an antechamber where weapons and equipment were stored, and a living room approximately 5 × 5 m in size (Junkelmann 2003: 210), giving them only a few square metres of living space each (Fig. 5.6). Each soldier had very little storage space for personal items, including *terra sigillata*. The graffiti on many *sigillata* vessels found in military camps indicate a need to mark one's property in order to prevent confusion in the small space of the *contubernia*. Apart from *sigillata*, the soldiers also possessed utility ceramics – for example, mortars and jugs – that had to be stored somewhere. Officers like Roman centurions, however, had larger living spaces and hence more room for personal belongings.

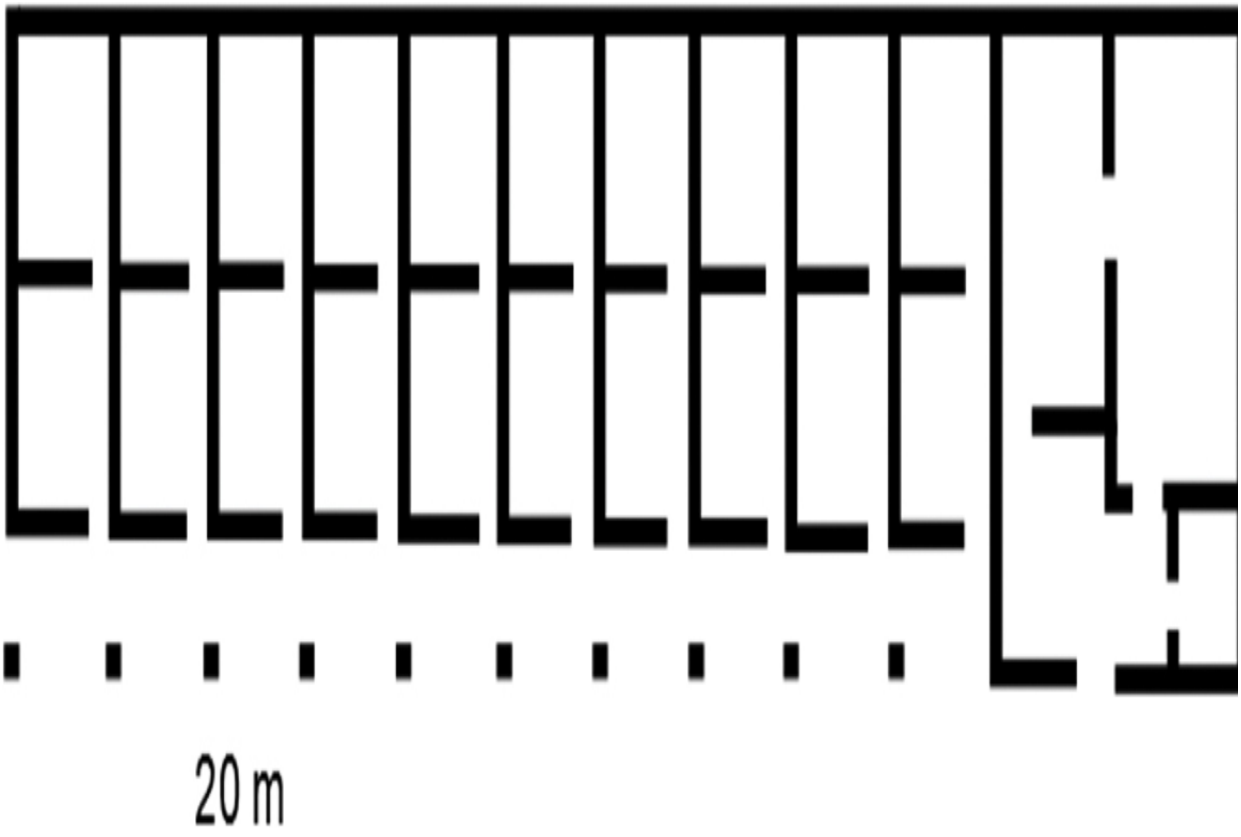


Fig. 5.6: Plan of a typical contubernium *(drawing by the author).*

Trade and transport of *terra sigillata* to the Rhine region

Transport by water was usually preferred to land transport for long distances, as a larger number of items could be transported more easily and conveniently over water. Even the Augustan geographer Strabo reported that goods were transported to Gaul mainly via rivers (Strabo: 4.1.14). If *sigillata* from Arezzo and Pisa were to reach the Rhine, they had to be transported to southern Gaul or Lyon first, from there finally being transported to the Rhine via the rivers Rhône, Saône and Mosel through smaller ships (Fig. 5.7).[2] The transport was carried out by skippers known as *nautae*. An illustrative example of a skipper is provided by the gravestone of Blussus, who died at the age of 75. It was found in Mainz and dates to the years around the middle of the first century AD (CIL 7067; Boppert 1992–93). It is likely that Blussus worked as a skipper for the Roman military and enjoyed some prosperity. This is indicated by the moneybag he is holding in his left hand on the relief. From various, mostly later inscriptions we know that, in addition to other boatmen, there were some merchants, the so-called *negotiatores*. Among them are some inscriptions from the second and third centuries AD from merchants who called themselves *negotiatores artis cretariae* or *negotiatores cretarii*, obviously meaning that they dealt in pottery. These traders were not necessarily specialized solely in ceramics and sometimes handled other goods. From Lyons, for example, the gravestone of a merchant is known who traded wine alongside ceramics (CIL XIII 2033). Both the *nautae* and the *negotiatores* often joined together to form corporations such as the corporation of the Rhône and Saône boatmen (*nautae Rhodanici et Ararici*).[3]

In a residential building in Pompeii, which was destroyed in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79, a wooden box was found containing ninety southern Gaulish *terra sigillata* bowls and 37 northern Italic lamps carefully packed together (Atkinson 1914). The composition of the contents of the box shows that *sigillata* did not reach Pompei directly from its production sites. The lamps must have been added somewhere along the way. Although this is a slightly later example, comparable containers must have existed in the Augustan period, as indicated by similar boxes found in the Augustan shipwreck of Comacchio (Berti 1990). Some southern Gaulish plates found in the area of a former tributary of the Rhine in Cologne were probably

packed into a wooden box. The find consists of five plates of the type Drag. 15/17 and 26 plates of type Drag. 18. All the vessels were new and unused. As the 31 plates were found upright in a row, the author suggests there was a former arrangement using a smaller box (Höpken 2011: 49f.). An older *sigillata* depot, dated closer to the period of investigation, was discovered in a pit in Mainz, with fourteen *sigillata* vessels, together with other ceramics, stacked inside one another. Two of them came from southern Gaul, the remaining 12 vessels being Italic products. Ten of the pieces bear a potter's stamp (von Pfeffer 1961; Ettlinger *et al*. 1990: 41). The finds can probably be interpreted as the depot of a merchant because a relatively large collection of uniform and intact *sigillata* vessels outside a military context at the beginning of the first century AD is difficult to explain otherwise. The ensemble can be dated to the second decade of the first century AD due to its composition and the finding of three coins (von Pfeffer 1961: 212).

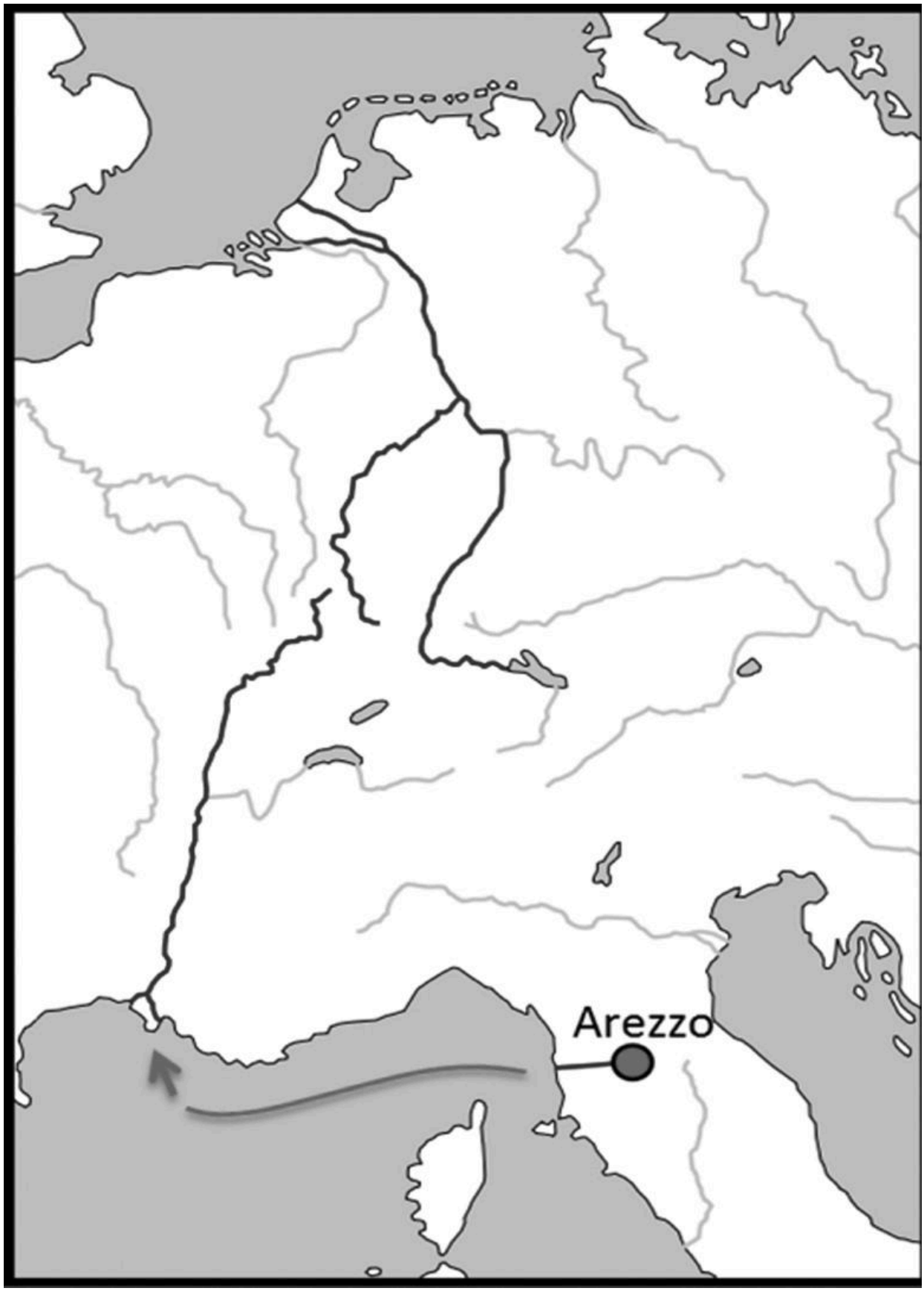

Arezzo

Fig. 5.7: Map of the river roads to the Rhine (map by the author).

Case study: Haltern

A satisfying economic classification of the phenomenon of Italic *sigillata* in the Rhine region requires an evaluation of the expected quantities, as profound reflections on the supply structures require at least a rough idea of the quantities that were traded. Therefore, it is essential to examine the quantity of supplies needed to provide the Roman army in Germany with tableware. The basis for an estimate of the total amount of *sigillata* in the Rhine region is the demand and average possession of the Roman soldier. Any statement regarding a possible total is somewhat problematic. It is difficult, if not impossible, to identify the total amount by means of the surviving finds. Therefore, one has to rely on comparing the proportions (Wilson 2009: 214ff). The earliest basic reflections on this were presented in the early 1980s by S. von Schnurbein on the basis of materials found in the military camp of Haltern in Westphalia. Assuming an approximate cups-to-plates ratio of 2:1, it was calculated that, on average, a soldier had a plate and two cups (von Schnurbein 1982: 132f). A similar ratio can also be seen in the material processed from the Augustan camp of Dangstetten in Southern Germany (Roth-Rubi 2006: 22).

Based on an average of three *terra sigillata* vessels per soldier and 5000 soldiers in the camp at Haltern, we can conclude that 15,000 vessels were in use in that camp on a random day. Besides the 15,000 vessels, which were necessary for initial supply, broken pieces had to be replaced. In the male society of a military camp, one can expect rougher treatment. For this reason, an annual hypothetical fracture rate of 20% seems quite realistic. Unfortunately, there are no studies of the broken fragments of Italic *sigillata* in early imperial military camps. Since *sigillata* were rather expensive, they were probably treated carefully. Also, the barracks usually possessed a soft clay floor, not indicative of a high fracture rate. An annual fracture rate of 20% means that every year 3000 vessels were supplied to the camp at Haltern. If one dates the camp from AD 1 to 9, a total of 39,000 vessels would have reached it (the dating of Haltern is still under discussion). A revision of the *terra sigillata* stamps found in the various Roman sites of

Haltern resulted in a total of 1073 pieces (Rudnick 2006: 30). Hence, only 2.75% of the total quantity of stamps in Haltern would be known today.

Almost all Italic *sigillata* vessels bore a potter's stamp. So, where are the remaining 38,000 stamps? To answer this question would require familiarity with the practice of waste disposal in early imperial military camps. A pioneer study of this topic can be found in the description of the amphorae from the previously mentioned camp of Dangstetten published by U. Ehmig (2010). Unlike *sigillata*, amphorae are purely transport containers. After their contents have been removed, they are no longer of use and thus usually become waste. Based on the findings, Ehmig reconstructed a maximum number of 2208 amphorae, of which only 4% of the associated fragments survived. The high proportion of missing fragments indicates disposal outside the camp.

In the military camp of Vindonissa-Windisch in Switzerland a rubble hill was found that was still about 10 m high and 18 m wide at the time of its discovery (Ettlinger and Simonett 1952). Similar dumps, still undiscovered, can be assumed for other camps as well. For these reasons, calculating the total number of vessels in a military camp must always be treated with caution. However, it remains the fact that, despite the limited space available in the narrow *contubernia* and the higher price of *sigillata*, they still represented a desirable commodity for Roman soldiers, being familiar to them from their homeland and becoming a veritable object of identification representing the Mediterranean way of life in faraway Germany. But *terra sigillata* were popular not only in the camps and among the soldiers: civilian settlements (known as *cannabae* or *vici*) emerged next to the camps, where relatives of the soldiers, artisans and merchants lived. In households and taverns too *terra sigillata* were needed.

If one assumes three vessels per person, despite the uncertainties mentioned above, about 15,000 vessels were in use in the camp at Haltern every day. These vessels were probably not carried by the troops on the march because of their fragility. As a consequence, there was an increased need for *sigillata* in the first phase after the establishment of the camp until everyone had been adequately supplied, after which only broken vessels had

to be replaced. With an estimated fracture rate of 20% per year, 3000 vessels would have to be replaced every year.

At this point the box from Pompeii in which 90 bowls and 37 lamps were packed should be mentioned again. These bowls were relatively large, while the plates and cups from Haltern were typically smaller. One would be able to put 150, maybe even 200 vessels of the Haltern types in one of these boxes. Taking the lower value of 150 individual items per box, this results in a surprisingly small number of just 20 boxes being required in a year. The plates and cups of the Augustan period vary despite the high level of standardization of *terra sigillata* in their size and thus also in their mass. In terms of calculating the created model 150 g for an average cup and 500 g for an average plate can serve as a basis. Because of the presumed ratio of cups to plates, twice as many cups as plates would be necessary to be replaced periodically. Thus, 100 cups and 50 plates can be expected in a box of 150 vessels. In accordance with the hypothetical model, the *sigillata* in one of these boxes would have weighed 40 kg. Even adding the weight of the wooden box, it is clear that one crate could be handled by two people, maybe even one strong person, without many problems.

Besides Haltern, there were other camps in the Rhine region as well. Altogether, we can assume that six legions were deployed in Germany during the occupation of Haltern.[4] If we start from the same assumption as in our case study, Haltern, with a fracture rate of 20% in all of its legionary fortresses, would have had an annual requirement of 18,000 *terra sigillata* vessels. These could be packed into just 120 boxes.

These speculative considerations show that the logistical effort to supply the legions in the Rhine region must have been manageable. Even if one starts from an equally large number of auxiliary soldiers, who also had three vessels each, the required quantities remain low compared to the much larger food deliveries. The approximate daily requirement of the basic foodstuff, namely wheat, per legion was about 4.7–5.2 tons per day (Jaschke 2009: 197). Besides wheat, amphorae with wine, olive oil and fish sauces arrived in the early imperial military camps in large numbers. In the camp of Dangstetten mentioned earlier, the editor was able to reconstruct a maximum number of 2208 amphorae, indicating an approximate weight of 33 tons only

for the empty transport containers (Ehmig 2010: 121). A number of unknown vessels that left no traces must be considered in this context. Compared to these figures, the necessary quantities of *sigillata* seem surprisingly small, even when using a generous calculation model.

Terra sigillata in local contexts

So far, this chapter has considered the official level of *sigillata* distribution. But *terra sigillata* also played a role in the lives of local people. Here, two case studies indicate different scenarios. As part of the present author's PhD project, 850 grave inventories in the tribal area of the Gallic 'Treveri' in the Mosel and Eifel area were thoroughly examined. The investigation already shows a rise in *terra sigillata* as a desirable status symbol, especially in the sumptuously furnished graves of the Treverian upper classes from 30 BC onwards. This phenomenon can be vividly observed in the necropolis of Goeblingen-Nospelt in Luxembourg (Metzler *et al.* 2009). Several consecutive graves show a clear change in inventories. While the earlier burials still have Celtic inventories in the Latène tradition, a significant change becomes evident around 30 BC. Besides 'real' *sigillata* vessels, a new kind of ceramic emerged, the so-called *terra belgica*, which was influenced by *terra sigillata* and combines local and Mediterranean pottery traditions (an overview of *terra belgica* is provided by Deru 1996). It was produced at different places in the territory of Treveri and also spread in this area in contrast to the early Italic *sigillata*. *Sigillata* vessels are unique pieces. An intent to supply, as in the case of the military camps, cannot be discerned.

A completely different example is the Augustan Germanic settlement of Delbrück Anreppen. This was very close to the Roman military camp of Anreppen, occupied at the same time, where *terra sigillata* were available in sufficient quantities. The findings from both places prove that exchanges took place between the camp and the settlement. Intact Germanic vessels, which may be regarded as containers for Germanic goods, were found inside the Roman military camp (Eggenstein 2000: 50), perhaps used for honey or milk products. In return, objects of Roman origin were found inside the Germanic settlement, including ceramics, coins, a fibula and numerous iron

nails. In addition to large quantities of local coarse ceramics, fragments of Roman pottery were found in small amounts almost everywhere within the Germanic settlement (Eggenstein 2000: 56; 2008: 239). In contrast to the Treveri, the Germanic settlers were obviously less interested in *sigillata*, the fragments of only two vessels being found among tonnes of locally produced coarse ceramics in their settlement. Overall, we can assume widespread adoption and imitation on the one hand and rejection on the other. The reactions of various local communities to the sudden availability of *terra sigillata* could differ considerably.

Conclusion

This chapter has described a specific market situation in which the sites of production of high quality ceramics were far away from their consumers. The high level of effort required for their distribution has also been demonstrated. In the case of Haltern, the sample calculation indicates that the annual demand of a large camp could be covered by the supply of only a small number of boxes. Even to supply the total Rhine region, only a few boxes were required. This becomes particularly clear when we compare the amount of *sigillata* with the necessary quantities of wheat and other foodstuffs.

Therefore, the military market in the Rhine region would not have played any decisive role in the production of Italic *terra sigillata*. The quantities of amphorae containing olive oil, wine and fish sauce that had to be transported to the Rhine region were greater. Also, they were much heavier and more expensive than *terra sigillata*. *Sigillata* reached its consumers on the boats of skippers as a minor part of the freight. Yet, notwithstanding its relatively minor economic importance, *sigillata* was an identification object with a high degree of symbolic significance. The aesthetic attraction of *sigillata* is still reflected in the selective choice of archaeologists, its high tradition ratio and the long history of research into this ceramic ware.

Terra sigillata not only attracted the Roman soldiers and their families, but also the local population. Although considered a status symbol in some areas, as in the tribal area of Gallic Treveri, and even imitated, it was rejected by other groups, such as the inhabitants of the Germanic settlement

of Delbrück Anreppen. Already in the Tiberian period, the Italic production centres were gradually being replaced by newly emerging workshops in southern Gaul, which could provide supplies to the Rhine region more effectively.

Abbreviations and ancient sources

CIL – Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum. Accessible at: http://cil.bbaw.de/
Strabo, *Geographica*
Tacitus, *Annales*
Velleius Paterculus, *Historia Romana*

Notes

1. For an overview of the foundation of cities by Caesar and Augustus, see Kienast (2014: 474ff).
2. Strabo also reports that the Rhône was navigable up to Lyon with large ships (Strabo: 4.1.14.).
3. For further information about the actors in and organizations of transport, see Martin-Kilcher (1994: 526ff).
4. Velleius Paterculus reports that Tiberius commanded five legions in 4/5 AD (Vell. 2.120.3).

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Chapter 6

Built space and consuming place: Archaeological research on a medieval market in Tulln, Lower Austria

Ute Scholz

Introduction

Excavations in the main square (Hauptplatz) of Tulln an der Donau, Lower Austria, have revealed the extensive remains of a medieval market (Scholz and Krenn 2010). As part of a research project at the University of Vienna on 'Space and Material Culture of a Medieval Town: Archaeological Research in Tulln', the findings and contexts of the market were analyzed with the aid of sociological theories of space and architecture (Sabeditsch and Scholz 2013). The full market was examined, and a study published as a doctoral thesis (Scholz 2015). The focus of this chapter is on 'consuming space' as marked in the connection between archaeological objects and market buildings. Consumer research is a recent approach in scientific research involving archaeological theory (Mullins 2011; Scholz 2012).

Archaeological data

The archaeology of the site included structures from a Roman civil settlement belonging to Fort Comagena. Archaeological traces of the market date back to the medieval period in the twelfth century AD, when the town was extended to the west (Fig. 6.1). The market was placed in the middle of newly built urban areas that shared the same spatial orientation. The new

main market was located directly at the western gate of the city wall, which also started being built at this time.

Thirteen different phases of the history of the market were defined during the archaeological research. The market was established in the high medieval period. From the eleventh to twelfth centuries (phase 1) the pre-market structures were closed, and first market buildings were erected on the eastern part of the site. In the twelfth century (phases 2–3) wooden structures were built, apparently the first signs of the setting up and extension of a market place. After a long-term process of urban extension, the market was provided with an infrastructure. In the thirteenth century (phases 4–6) the market was paved with gravel from the Danube River, and a more stable market infrastructure was built consisting of tables, benches and a well. Butchers' stalls were situated in the western part and were in use until the end of the century.

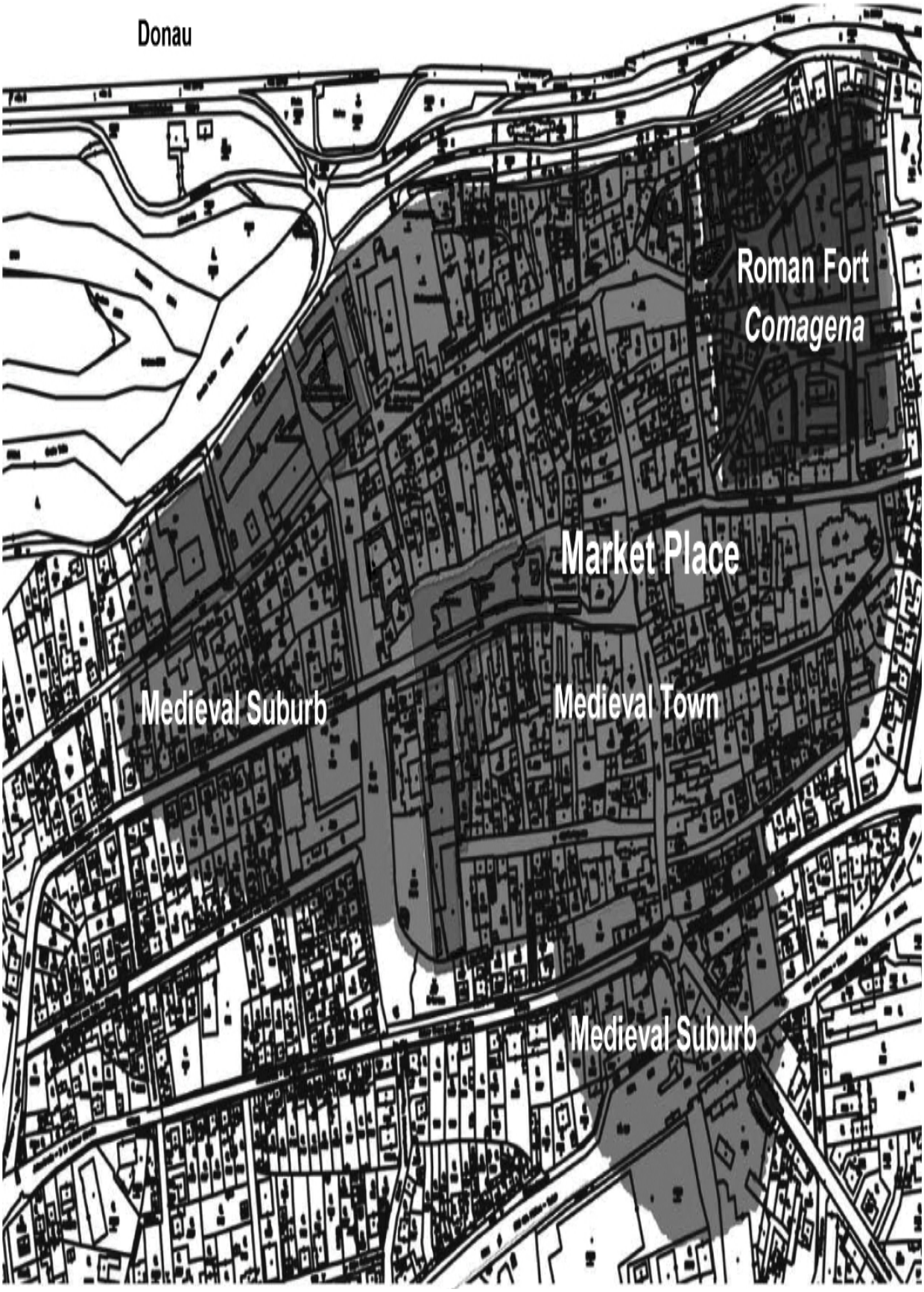

Donau
Roman Fort
Comagena
Market Place
Medieval Suburb
Medieval Town
Medieval Suburb

Fig. 6.1: Tulln an der Donau: excavated archaeological sites.

In the late medieval period the market became even more organized, with cultural activities being traceable at the site. During the fourteenth century (phases 7–9) the wooden buildings were reorganized, and the butchers' stalls modified. In the fifteenth century a structural change occurred, with no archaeological evidence of buildings traceable at the market (phase 10). Instead, about 50 ovens were built for use in the production of an unknown product, possibly food or beverages to be consumed at market festivals (Scholz 2013).

The early modern period (sixteenth–seventeenth centuries, phase 11) is marked as a phase of representation, shaped by the Reformation and Counter-reformation and a declining economy. The archaeological record shows only a few building activities, but at the end of the seventeenth century a trinity column (*Dreifaltigkeitssäule*) was placed at the centre of the market. For the modern period, dating from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries (phases 12–13), the only archaeological evidence is traces of infrastructure below the ground, for example, sewers and line trenches.

Theories of space and consumer research

Theories of space and in consumer research were used in examining the contexts and findings of the excavation. As defined in Martina Löw's book *Raumsoziologie*, the *sociology of space* describes space as 'a relational configuration of living beings and social goods at places' (Löw 2001: 224–230; see also Löw 2011). The experience of space and its construction take place in two different steps. At first *spacing* is defined as a concrete physical place, where the placing, positioning and erecting of three-dimensional structures take place. This process is significantly affected by the actors and structures they create. The second step, called *synthesis* (*Syntheseleistung*), describes how single elements and ensembles are linked with space constructed through mental connections (ideas, human perception). Therefore, virtual or social structured spaces arise that are shaped by different processes, such as political or historical influences (for an English summary of Löw's method, see Geiger 2013: 46–50). The sociology of architecture deals with the concrete phenomena of built space (Trebsche *et*

al. 2010). Buildings, such as archaeological architectural contexts, can be examined in terms not only of their *physical* nature, but also of their *function*, *organization*, *manorial use* and *economic* or *social* relations (Schubert 2010: 41–62).

The archaeology of a medieval market can thus be understood as a space constructed for trading with connections to different spheres, such as urban space, commercial space, manorial space, social space etc., in the sense of the sociology of space. On the other hand, the market buildings may be examined through an in-depth analysis drawing on the sociology of architecture.

The most appropriate method for examining access to the market, motion sequences and the open space of the market place is so-called *space syntax* (Hillier and Hanson 1984). In the case of the Tulln market place, the best results were obtained by investigating the open space using a convex map which displays the formula 'convex articulation = number of convex spaces / number of buildings' (*ibid*.: 98).

The market not only consists of trading areas and buildings, it is a place in which to trade goods. Consumer research has dealt extensively with the definition of commodities and has looked at the question of how an object becomes a commodity (Hahn 2005: 54–99). Fundamental to the analysis of the change in status of an artifact is its biography, which Igor Kopytoff describes as a process of commodification (Kopytoff 1986: 64–91). In this view, in addition to their physical biography as functional or everyday objects, things have a technical biography, for example, when they are repaired. The economic biography of objects can be written using information about different prices, falling values and maintenance costs. All these biographies are culturally, socially and historically determined. The process of commodification is further influenced by the value of objects that can be exchanged in a separate action against a counterpart. Objects are therefore only marked as a commodity in a cultural and cognitive process, a condition that is not static and may indeed change, a factor of great importance in evaluating archaeological finds from a market. Consumer research aids in making definitions of the status of archaeological objects, as will be discussed in detail below. In addition, there is a connection between

goods and/or objects and the spatial appearance of stores and market buildings, a theme examined by recent research under the topic of *consuming space*.

In what follows, this chapter focuses on the three topics of markets, space and commodities. Evidence from the market as a specific archaeological site will be analysed under the aspect of built space. Definitions of goods will be examined with the help of the consumer research and will be reviewed from the point of view of its possible application in interpreting archaeological objects. After bringing these sources together, the question will be: Where is what being sold?

Market

As a first step in understanding the functional practice and use of buildings and space in a market, I explored a typical modern district market, the Meidlinger Markt in Vienna's twelfth *Bezirk* or district (inspired by participant observation: cf. Schmidt-Lauber 2007). As a result, it became clear that the Meidlinger Markt has various functions. Thus, it is a daily market for fruit, vegetables and meat and a weekly market for seasonal goods. It also has a weekly flea market, but no fair. The market place has a cultural function for the neighbourhood because the place is used for various cultural, social or political events by residents, merchants, political parties and the district government. As a result, there are strong connections between the structure of the site, its use of space and the practice and activities of the individuals who frequent it. Different kinds of buildings are used for the sale of special goods (butchers' stores), and space is used differently at different times (weekly, daily, and monthly), not only for selling, but also for cultural, social or political purposes. Not all the market activities have a permanent function in using buildings: for example, in the flea market and daily market (the farmers' market) folding tables are used.

The main implications for interpreting the archaeology of a market is the great deal of mobility within it, which is linked to both the buildings and the use of space, and the historical changes that must have occurred in market practices, market buildings and the use of space.

Essential historical questions about the establishment of the market and its siting in the town will be examined with reference to the main topics of the sociology of space. In the Middle Ages in Lower Austria and Bavaria markets were designed as rectangular squares (Freitag 2013: 42–44; Kenzler 2001: 204–208; Klaar 1963: 93–115). During the late Middle Ages, several market places were established in many cities where the function of these places has become an issue (for example, in Vienna: see Czeike 1970; Perger 1970; 2001: 199–246). Four types of market can be distinguished which used different places in the town: daily, weekly, periodic markets and periodic fairs. Historical research on daily and weekly markets in the Middle Ages is scarce (Schlesinger 1975: 268–271; Spieß 1916: 339–345), but the course of periodic markets such as carnivals or fairs has been well researched (Irsigler and Pauly 2007). Nor has archaeological evidence for these different types of markets has been the focus of previous research. In addition to these market functions, which worked well in the sense of spatial sociology, another spatial subdivision can be added, as each market may be seen as an economic, cultural, religious, manorial or gendered space. To determine the function of a market, we often rely on written sources. On the other hand, the structural elements of the market can usually can be determined in the archaeological record as well. On the basis of written sources, it is possible to prove the existence of certain market structures in the Danube region (see Park 2005: 38–44, after Gengler 1882: 136–147). These are mostly wooden constructions that can be defined respectively as stands or *stationes*, tables or *mensae*, benches or *banci*, racks or *Schrangen*, tents or *tentoria*, market stalls or *institorium* / *Kram*, arcade or *Laube*, hall or *Schranne*, pillory/gallows or *Pranger*/*Galgen*, and well or *Brunnen*.

Theory and practice: Basic framework for the interpretation of market buildings and objects

Built space (gebauter Raum) in the market place

The frequently used term ‘market stall’ for market buildings (German *Marktstand* or *Marktbude*) is not entirely accurate in the historical sense. This kind of market architecture will serve as an example to explain research into the built space of market buildings by combining written, pictorial and

archaeological sources. Written sources take the form of market rules and different forms of charters in the lower Austrian region in the late Middle Ages. Images include medieval panel paintings and early modern images of markets in the form of graphic prints, calendar images or townscapes. Archaeological sources are reviewed with reference to the structure of the sociology of architecture. It is therefore possible to identify different market buildings as defined through written and pictorial sources.

The example of tables (*mensae*) will be discussed. Written sources describe the *mensae* as wooden constructions with three or more legs similar to the appearance of tables today (Gengler 1882: 136–137; Herrmann 1917: 184–187; Perger 1970: 43–48). The tables had a fixed spatial location but could not be covered or closed, so did not create a room-like space. They were used to sell meat, fish, bread, shoes, soles and canvases. Medieval pictorial sources show the construction of wooden tables, often with a combination of racks, for example, a table with pieces of pork from the Nuremberg *Hausbücher*.[1] Tables are depicted as part of a market ensemble at the 'Vicke Schorler Rolle', a drawing of Rostock the late sixteenth century (Fig. 6.2). A print of the Lübeck market from around 1580 shows four rows of long tables where bread and various bakery products are displayed.[2]

From the point of view of reconstructing the archaeological contexts, these tables might reflect the regular rows of post-holes that occur in the archaeological record. In previous archaeological research there are hardly any interpretations of ensembles of post-holes as tables. In the fourteenth-century market at Tulln, however, there are strong indications that they do indeed represent rows of tables.



Fig. 6.2: Tables and racks at an urban market (Vicke Schorler Rolle: Rostock*, 1586, detail).*

Objects in the market place

In order to process archaeological finds, theories of material consumption were applied. The aim was to determine the process through which objects become commodities and whether it is possible to identify goods in the archaeological record. In characterizing the artifacts, terms derived from Koptytoff's research into consumption were used, namely 'spheres of exchange', the separation of persons and things, the singular versus the common, the classification of things and the homogeneity of things and values (Kopytoff 1986: 64–91). Historical approaches also show different procedures. In the medieval context, the separation of persons and things followed other rules, for example, in the trade in relics, slavery or prostitution (Geary 1986: 169–191; Scheibelreiter 2010: 255–258; Voltmer 2001: 431–432).

In studying archaeological objects, the process of *classification* appears to be the most suitable in creating a uniform commercial equivalence among goods from the process of classifying and evaluating objects. Therefore, conspicuous *homogeneities* among the archaeological objects should be recorded. Furthermore, uniform objects as a commodity should be distinguished from special objects. As a result of historical and social processes, this classification could also change or switch back, as, for example, in the case of antiques.

In classifying archaeological objects, two factors must be taken into account: archaeological objects have a special biography, and their archaeological record, i.e. the context, is embedded in a spatial reference. A scheme for the classification of archaeological objects in the market has been designed that aims to examine their use (Fig. 6.3).

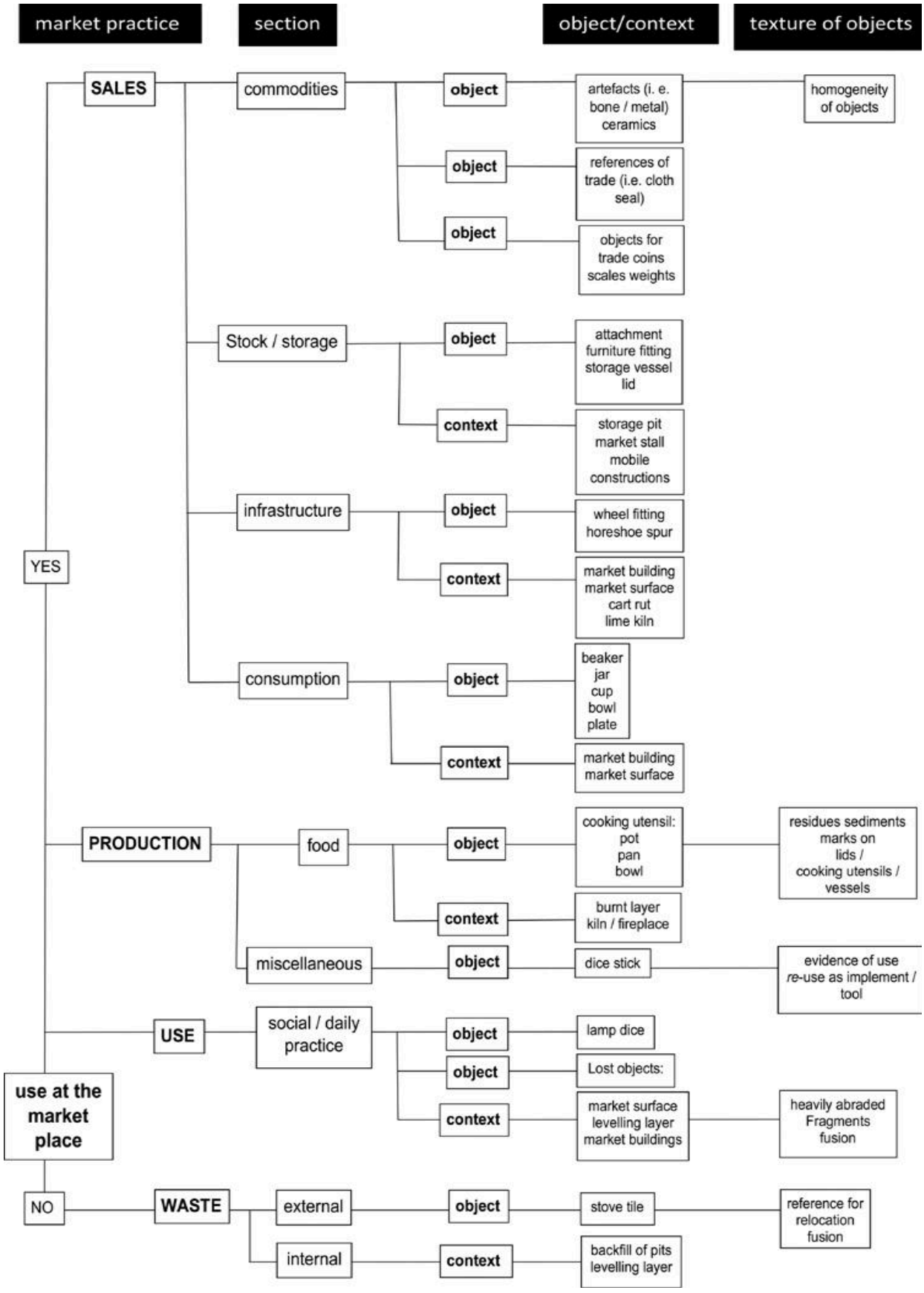

market practice
section
object/context
texture of objects
use at the market place
YES
NO
SALES
commodities
object
artefacts (i. e. bone / metal) ceramics
homogeneity of objects
object
references of trade (i.e. cloth seal)
object
objects for trade coins scales weights
Stock / storage
object
attachment furniture fitting storage vessel lid
context
storage pit market stall mobile constructions
infrastructure
object
wheel fitting horeshoe spur
context
market building market surface cart rut lime kiln
consumption
object
beaker jar cup bowl plate
context
market building market surface
PRODUCTION
food
object
cooking utensil: pot pan bowl
residues sediments marks on lids / cooking utensils / vessels
context
burnt layer kiln / fireplace
miscellaneous
object
dice stick
evidence of use re-use as implement / tool
USE
social / daily practice
object
lamp dice
object
Lost objects:
context
market surface levelling layer market buildings
heavily abraded Fragments fusion
WASTE
external
object
stove tile
reference for relocation fusion
internal
context
backfill of pits levelling layer

Fig. 6.3: Classification of the use of objects at the market.

The data for the archaeological analysis consist of finds which were collected from the archaeological contexts at the market. First, a selection must be made between objects used at the market and objects that obviously came to the site as waste from other urban contexts. The distinction is not easy to make, as medieval finds are often similar in composition, despite coming from different urban contexts. As a consequence, the focus for analysing the finds from the market will rely on the use of things and their archaeological context.

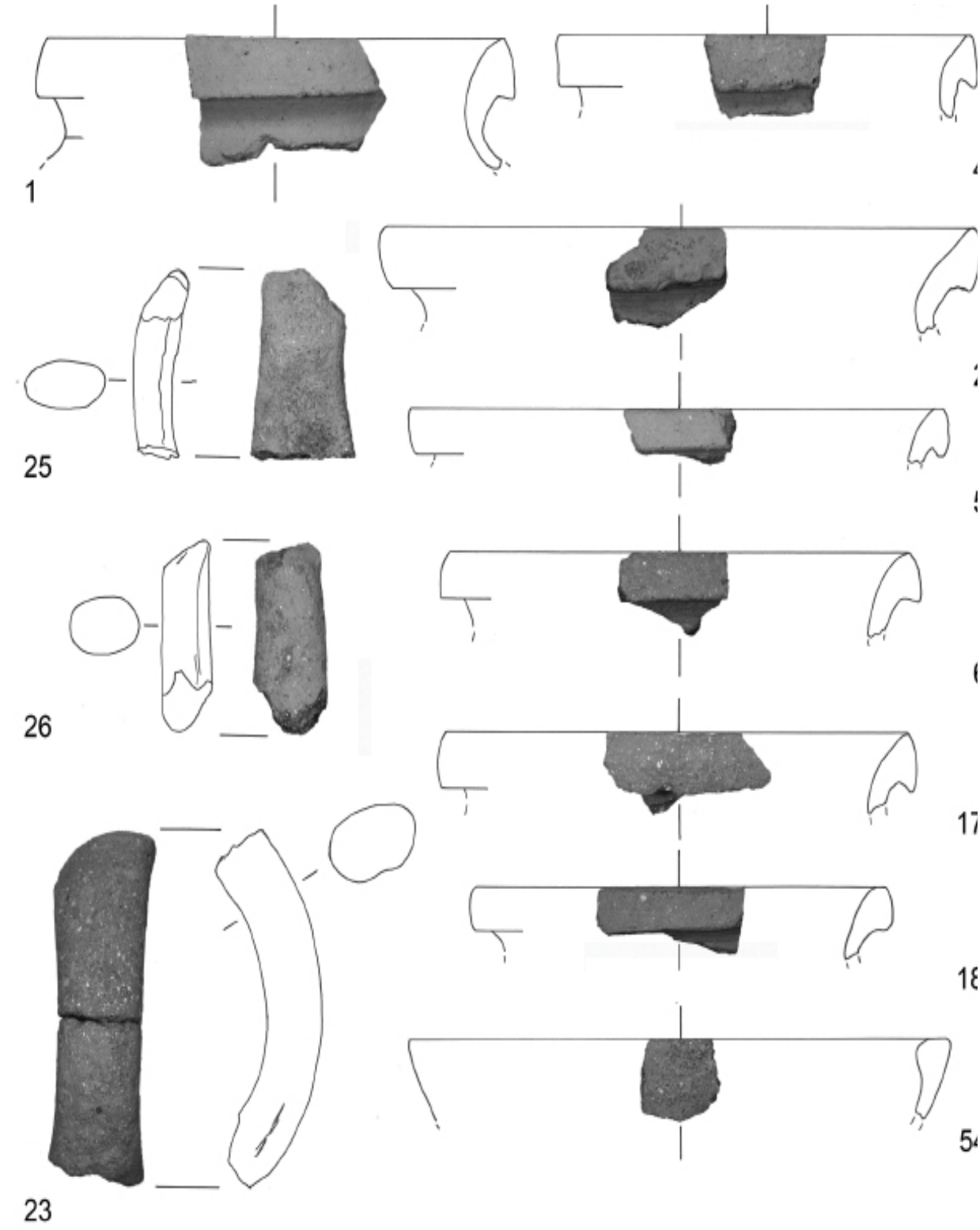
At the first level of activities in the market, the categories are subdivided into sales, production, use and waste. At the level of market practice, these actions are divided further into dealing with goods, storage, the establishment and maintenance of a market infrastructure, consumption in the market, the production of food and artifacts, daily and social activities, and the disposal of waste in the market. This level of market practice can be subdivided into related objects and the archaeological contexts to which they belonged. The objects can be classified because of their assigned functions. Archaeological contexts may have various functions. Another level can be integrated into the texture of objects and contexts. Traces on objects provide guidance regarding how they were used and their different biographies. The texture of contexts, such as the composition of layers or fillings, also belongs to this level.

In order to work with these categories, all the archaeological finds were recorded in a database and categories were added that sort the finds into functional groups. For example, for ceramics 21 categories were used taken from a ceramics handbook for archaeological finds in Austria (Hofer and Gaisbauer 2010: 64–65; for example: food preparation, food intake, transport, storage, heating, lighting). Other categories of finds were grouped in similar ways. To illustrate some of the categories, the ceramics finds will be used as an example of the *homogeneity* of objects in the market finds more generally.

In the eastern part of the thirteenth-century market paving (Obj. 235, phase 4), a particularly high number of pots made from oxidizing ceramic containing mica (Fig. 6.4) were uncovered. A large number had a distinctive

type of lip and a narrow rim diameter of 12–16 cm. These could have been cooking utensils for the production of food in the market due to their use as functional pots. Tests for residues and adhesions (the biography of objects) could provide further indications, but there were no visible deposits or traces of smoke. Alternatively, they could have been used for the consumption of food held in them or offered for sale as containers for another commodity. Due to their homogeneity, their use as a commodity in their own right is also very possible.

The evidence for other categories traceable in the finds differs greatly (for further examples, see below). Objects of trade like weights and scales can be found, but not very often. Examples of storage include evidence of vessels, lids and metal fittings on wooden boxes. Other objects, such as wooden stakes, reveal traces of construction processes, as well as horseshoes used for transportation systems. Consumption, specifically for consuming food or drinks in the market, has come down in the form of ceramic and glass fragments belonging to beakers, cups, bowls and plates and bone knife handles. The composition of these objects differs during the different periods from the Middle Ages to modern times. In combination with the investigation of space and buildings in the market, objects and space can be categorized with reference to the notion of ‘consuming space’.



Obj. 0235 FNR 1781

Fig. 6.4: Ceramic fragments, red coloured ware produced in oxidizing atmosphere and containing mica.

Interpreting the archaeological record from the market

Some different methods of analyzing the archaeological contexts and findings of the market square will now be demonstrated by interpreting the finds in relation to context and space, confronting them with theories of consumption and space to analyze the use of buildings and space in the market.

Practice and finds in the market

As an example of the interpretation of assemblages of archaeological material, an analysis of animal bone material will be presented. In phases 4–6, the archaeological finds discovered in the southeast of the market may very well be linked with interpretations of the archaeology of market buildings. The pavement in this area contained a lot of archaeological objects belonging to different categories. As shown above in exploring the classification of objects found in the market using the example of red coloured ware ceramic pots, extensive categories and examples exist of the material culture of archaeological objects. The most striking categories of finds from the pavement are metal objects and animal bones.

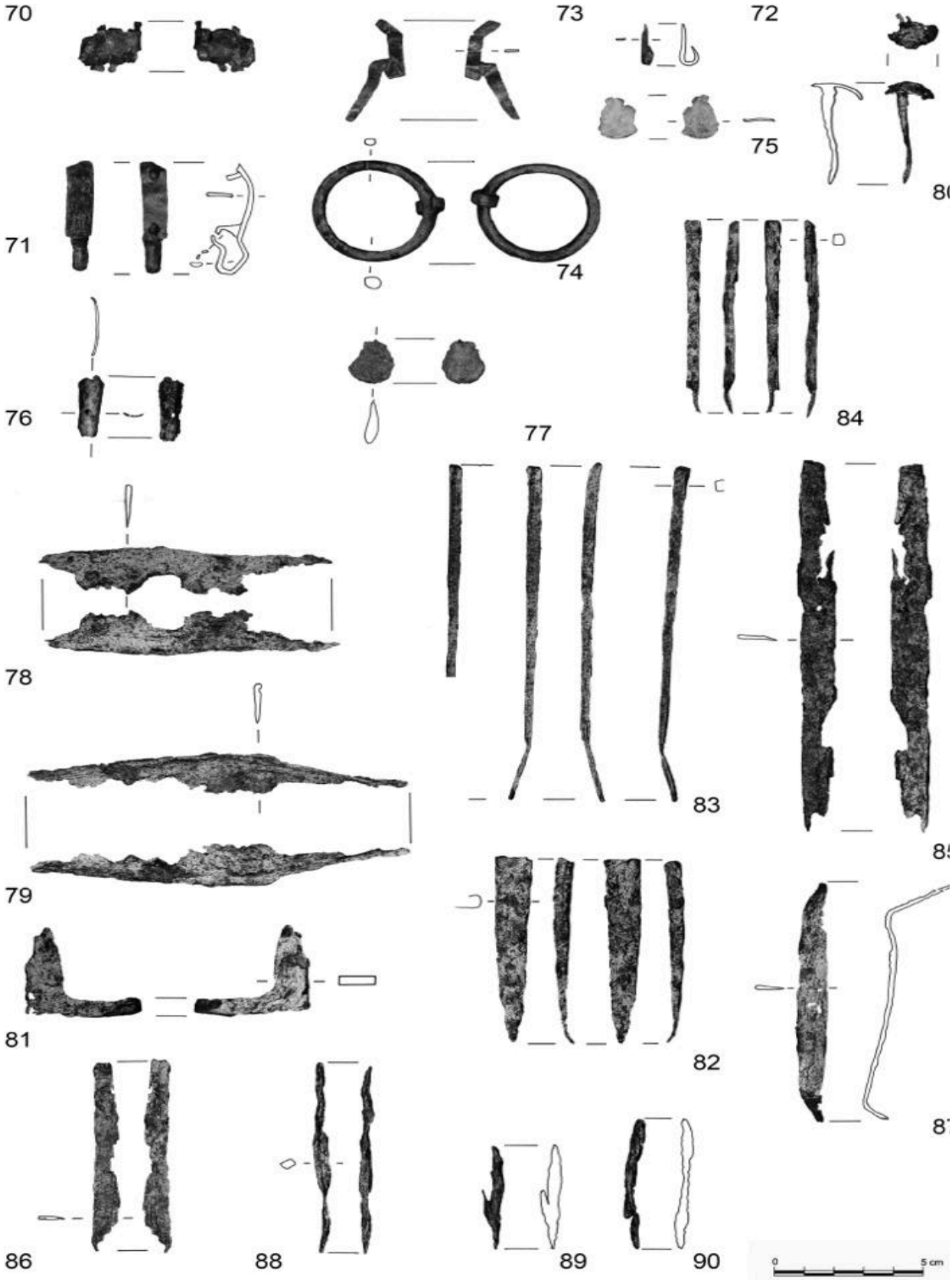
The pebbly pavement of the market contained a large quantity of crushed animal bones, which were re-used as building material (Böhm and Scholz 2015), showing a specific spatial distribution. In the area of the western posthole structures, the distribution of animal species and the representation and size of skeleton parts were different from samples from the area of the entrance or the open space. There is an obvious spatial distribution of animal bones in respect of the different species, their representation and fragmentation. This archaeozoological interpretation relates to written sources dating to the mid-thirteenth century concerning a butcher's guild in the town. The archaeological record of the postholes, which can be linked to tables and benches, can be correlated with written sources and the archaeological contexts of butchers' stalls. There is written evidence for a

guild-organized meat trade, recorded in the butchers' guild's rules dating from 1267 (Eggendorfer 1980).

The pavement in the southeastern area (Obj. 235) contained the highest amounts of metal finds within the whole market surface (Fig. 6.5). Out of a total of 93 finds, 16 were of household goods that can be connected to the daily practises of the market. They consist of artifacts like metal sheets, an object made of lead, cloth seals, knives, a scabbard chape, a padlock and a key. Nine finds belonged to the category of clothing in the form of belt fittings, buttons, aiglets (*Nestelhülse*) and buckles. Four objects belonged to the category of infrastructure, for example, horseshoes and a harness ring, six consisted of tools like drills and implements. Forty objects were used as fittings, namely three hooks, two clamps and 35 nails. Finally, there was a pendant and three sheets.

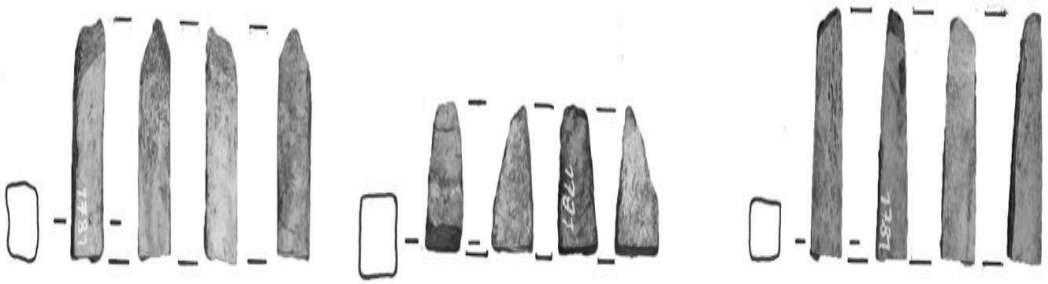
Most of the objects have a connection to the market infrastructure, being concerned with transport or the presentation of goods and fittings, followed by objects of daily practice in the market in the form of household or market items. Together with the clothing category, they represent not production activities, but the use of the market and are therefore linked to agents in the market. Because of their homogeneity, the large number of artifacts used as fitting objects could be considered goods, as most of these archaeological objects are already in use. The nails, for example, show signs of usage which leads one to interpret them as lost finds. Drills and tools, on the other hand, were in a corroded condition but were not strikingly twisted, so can be classified as goods. The accumulation of hooks, nails and clamps correlates well with the evidence for racks and indicates a direct connection with the architecture of the market place.

Animal bone artifacts found as material in the market layers does not easily fit into the developed classification of market objects. Normally, bone artifacts were understood as evidence of handicrafts being present in the market. There are references to dice production in the fish market in Konstanz (Erath 1999), waste products of craft production and evidence of handicrafts in the market at Soest (Melzer 1999; Hallenkamp-Lumpe 2005) and waste from the production of rosary beads in St Jakobs Platz in Munich (Brand 2007).



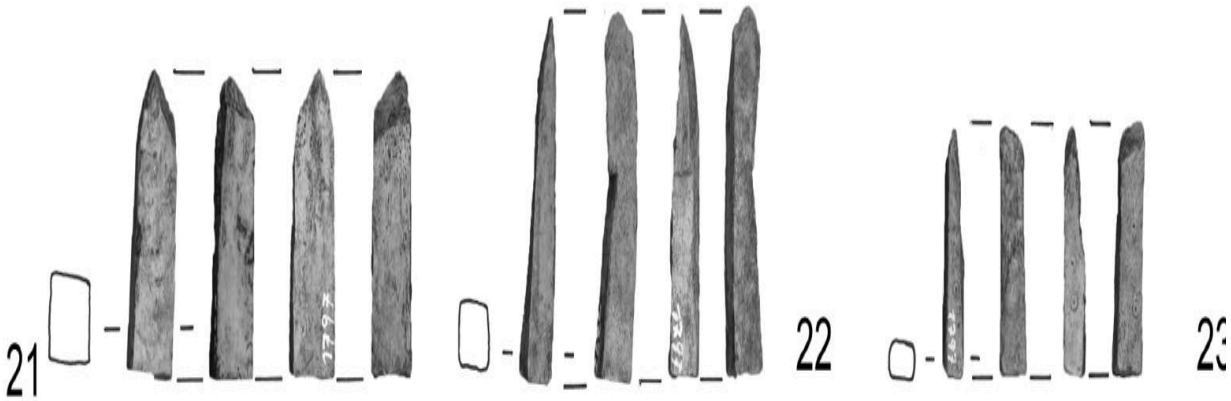
Obj. 0235 FNR 1781

Fig. 6.5: Metal finds in Obj. 235 containing among other things a number of hooks, nails, and clamps.



66 67 68

Obj. 0235 FNR 1781



21 22 23



24 25 26

Obj. 0235 FNR 1797



Fig. 6.6: Ends of animal bones remaining over from the production of dice, here called 'dice sticks'.

This chapter aims to reconsider these interpretations since the relationship between objects and market activities offers further possible interpretive approaches. One example is the interpretation of bone objects that belong to the market in Tulln. The layers of the market that date from the thirteenth century contained 17 animal bone artifacts (Figure 6.6), which mostly come from the southeastern part of the market (Obj. 235 and 237). There are a few lost finds such as a needle and a tail comb (Fnr. 1797/38), which belong to the categories of 'clothes' and 'personal hygiene' and also fit the classification of 'daily practice'. Evidence of social practice is seen in an artifact which was used for games (astragal, Fnr. 1797/40). The remains of production processes are shown in cattle metapodials (Fnr. 1797/39+41), especially in the so called 'dice sticks' (Fnr. 1781/66-68; 1797/21–26), the leftovers of processes for the production of dice that are often used to prove the presence of bone carvers at a market place.

Archaeological evidence for proof of craftsmanship is not easy to find (Theune 2008). M. Baumhauer developed a scheme that ordered the archaeological records of production processes into different categories. The 'A' category means that proof of the presence of full handicrafts at an archaeological site needs the evidence of a production site (Baumhauer 2003: 33–36). Otherwise there is no direct proof of handicrafts (categories B and C), most such evidence being indirect. The majority of the published bone artifacts from market places were found in levelling layers and thus only provide indirect evidence for the production of artifacts, and not for production at the site of the market itself.

The bone artifacts from Tulln's market place were found in the pebble pavement. They show evidence of daily and social practice regarding the consumption of goods and the use of the market infrastructure, as shown above in the classification (Fig. 6.3). Dice sticks are waste objects from a production process, but there are signs of further usage. All the objects in this category were pointed at one end and were used in a way which left traces of oblique usage (Fig. 6.7), suggesting that these objects might have been reused as tools. In this case, these objects are proof not of the production of dice but of another use for an unknown purpose.



Fig. 6.7: Dice stick Fnr. 1797/21 with oblique traces of usage at one end.

Identifying commodities in archaeological records is also difficult. Written sources, mainly medieval charters, tell us about some of the goods that were handled in Tulln. Already in the eleventh century, trade on the Danube from Regensburg to Russia is documented, the commodities mentioned being linen, fur, gold and herrings (Fichtenau and Zöllner 1950: 116–119 no. 86; Scheibelreiter 2010: 255–258; Kühtreiber and Marian 2000). Furthermore, trade in wine is recorded in late medieval times carried out by a Dominican convent, which received salt in return (Kerschbaumer 1874: 324 XX).

These kinds of commodities cannot be verified from the archaeological finds at first glance. There is no direct evidence for any sales product or good in the archaeological record. However, aided by the classification of objects, further suggestions can be made. The red coloured ware pots may have been linked to a product made in the region, for example, wax or honey. Animal bone dice sticks may have been used for the processing of leather. Some of the metal finds might have been be related to the goods of metal chandlers. Further considerations regarding the relationship between objects and built environments provide more suggestions.

At Tulln's market, examples were verified of the categories *sales, production, use* and *disposal*. According to the *sales* category, archaeological evidence for *commodities* is hardly traceable: the homogeneity of objects might be the only link with this category. Indirect evidence of *trade transactions* from artifacts such as scales, weights or coins is better documented. The mapping of found coins shows little resemblance to the tradition of trade contacts from written sources, especially in the high medieval phase of the market. *Storage* evidence at the market is documented by furniture fittings and storage vessels, which were sunk into the ground. Finds related to the market *infrastructure* include some metal objects for fixing and building materials, a wooden stick, and re-used brick fragments, which were used for paving. *Consumption* in the market can be examined by analysing the ceramics finds. In late medieval times, several types of ceramics were created in the form of more representative vessels or implement handles, and new types of vessels were established (for example, beakers; for further details, see Scholz 2015, chap. 7).

Research into *production* at the market was critically reviewed using the example of the production of animal bone objects. There is no example of a category A site (after Baumhauer 2003) for the production of any commodity during any the periods of the market. The often-cited production of bone artifacts and leather in the market place is only traceable as indirect evidence (for example, through dice sticks). The accumulation of these categories in the market pavements has to be understood as a rearrangement in the sense of a *secondary deposition*. Products that were made in the market itself were manufactured using a mobile and flexible manner of production.

The production of food is one example of a production process. The ensembles of late medieval furnaces found in the Tulln market and other Austrian market squares in the Danube region might form part of this category. Archaeological, archaeobotanical and thermal analysis has shown that the furnaces were probably used for the manufacture of food (e.g. pastries) in connection with the periodic fairs (Scholz 2013). At this point the *economic and cultural functions* of market installations become entangled.

There are many instances of the *use* of things in the market place. *Daily practice* in the market is most clearly reflected in the findings of the market levels and pavements. Here, differences between market paving, entrance areas and the pavement of the butcher's stalls can be discerned in several categories of finds. The 'lost' findings are mostly varied in the areas of market buildings (tables, benches, racks) in the southeast of the market. This area can be seen as dense site within the market in respect of both categories of finds and built space.

With regard to waste, we can find differences in the practise of waste disposal in the market, identified on the basis of finds contained in large volume contexts. From the late Middle Ages on, the number of artifacts increased, indicating the disposal of waste from other urban areas (e.g. tiles).

Consuming space: Where is what being sold?

In thinking about built space and market buildings, the use of space in the market and the spatial distribution of archaeological artifacts and their contexts, the following question arises: Where is what being sold (Fig. 6.8)?

I will use the example of the thirteenth-century market to demonstrate the connection between space and objects in the market.

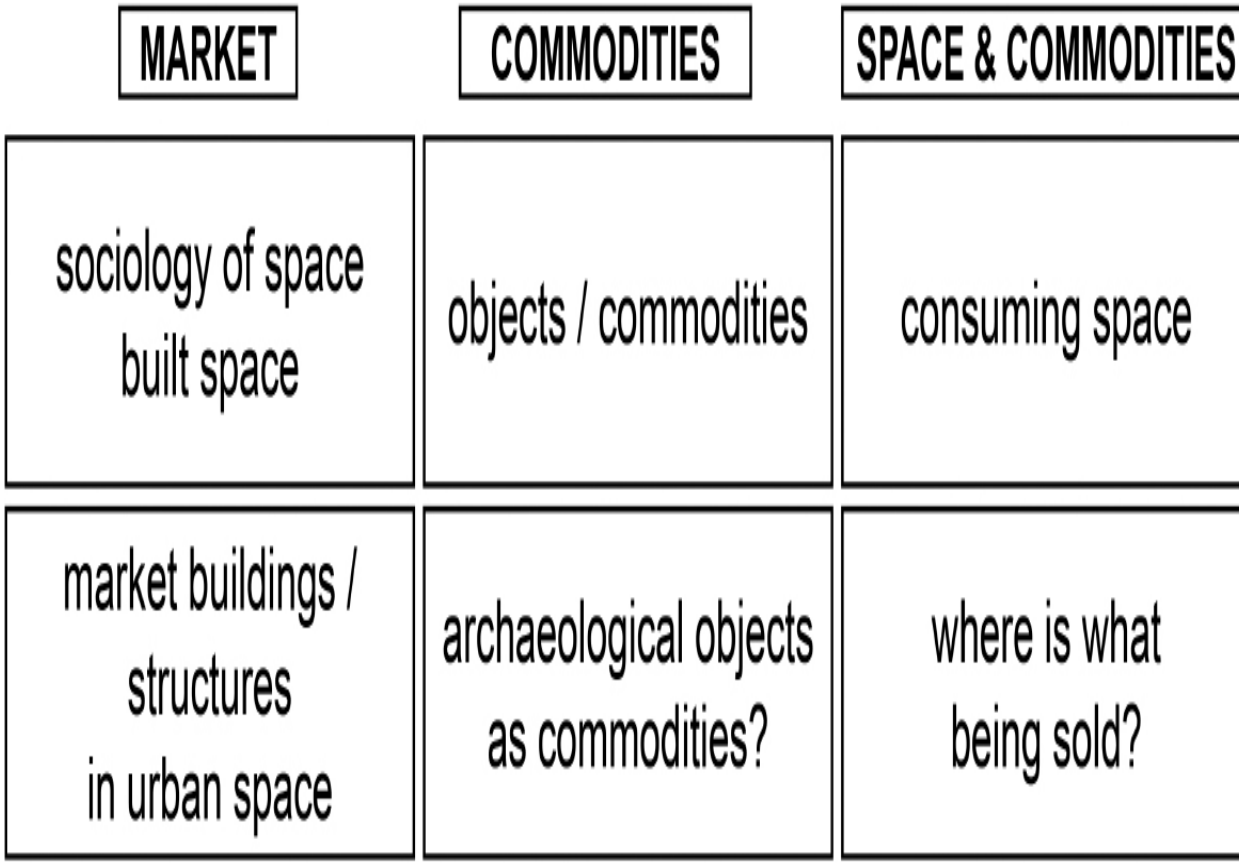


Fig. 6.8: Connecting the archaeological objects with market and space.

The thirteenth-century archaeological contexts of the Tulln market place provide the first evidence of a built space at that site. A well and several post-holes were located in the western part of the market, probably forming butchers' stalls (Fig. 6.9; see also Böhm and Scholz 2015). The stakeholes might be evidence for movable elements such as fences, tents or wind shields. There was an open space without traces of market buildings in the centre of the market, which was paved with pebbles in the mid-twelfth century and was used up to the end of the thirteenth century. Several structures that were formed of postholes on the eastern side of the square can be interpreted as market tables and benches. This area is to be examined in detail with regard to contexts and finds. Post-holes were deepened in the market surface throughout the thirteenth century and apparently belonged to

different kinds of market structures. In archaeological research, these structures are generally interpreted as ‘stalls’ (Hoffmann 2011: 69–70) or ‘halls’ (Scherrer 2010: 36–69), or not interpreted at all because of the uncertainty of the evidence (Brand 2006: 275; Hoffmann 2011: 68–73).

However, many buildings in a medieval market have a specific purpose and a connection to the goods they offer. Research on the use of market buildings and their appearance at the Tulln market show that open spaces could be used for rentable pitches or *stationes*, where goods were arranged in baskets or on the floor (Scholz 2015: chaps 4, 5, 9; Gengler 1882: 136). Carts could also be parked and used to offer goods like hay or wood. Archaeological evidence for this appears in the form of cart ruts, for example, in the Kornmarkt at Zwickau (Kenzler 2001: 184–185, fig. 111).

Special goods were sold on tables or *mensae*, for example, in St Pölten, for meat, fish, bread, shoes and canvas (Herrmann 1917: 184–187). Tables are rarely noted in the archaeological record, but in the late medieval market of Tulln they are obvious. Certain rows of post-holes had a very small ground plan, which cannot be interpreted as a building and were even too small for a market stall, but some of them formed rows of tables.

Tables often were accompanied by racks or *Schrangen* (Gengler 1882: 137), which could be built from single or double sets of wooden posts, as can be seen in late medieval images in the Nürnberger Hausbücher showing butchers selling meat.[3] This category of built space has hardly been taken into consideration at all in archaeological interpretations.

Benches or *banci* were reserved especially for sales of meat, bread and cloth (Herrmann 1917: 184; Perger 1991: 47). In medieval paintings benches also appear as a combination of a stall with a front table, as seen in the butchers’ stalls shown in the *Tacuinum sanitatis*, a handbook of health of which an Italian version exists dating to the fourteenth century (Unterkircher 1979: 142–147, 150–151, 155, 160). An early modern calendar painting of the Perlachplatz in Augsburg in winter shows a small bench for selling fish (Dormeier 2007: 159). Very different archaeological contexts have been interpreted as *banci*, mostly identified as butchers’ stalls (*Fleischbänke*) from the evidence of findings or in combination with written sources (e.g. in

Konstanz: Klöckler and Röber 2006: 261; Danzig: Krzywdzinski 2011; and St Pölten: Scherrer 2010: 58–65, 68–70).

Chandlers were allowed to rent special market stalls or *chramae* (e.g. in Linz: Rausch 1969: 113; and in Vienna: Hering 1965: 21–27) retailing goods they had not produced themselves (Park 2005: 79–83), including textiles, metalwork, leather goods, special foods and spices, stationery, toys, household appliances and crafts.

Tents also formed part of the market architecture (Gengler 1882: 137). In medieval pictorial sources they are depicted in a military context or as an accessory of travelling rulers (Schmid 2013: 39, figs 2–3; Röhrig 1975: 70–71). They might have different ground plans, for example, rectangular or circular, and are traceable archaeologically from stakeholes with diameters of up to ten centimetres.

The well was a main element of any market, providing both it and the neighbourhood with water. The area near the well was a place for meeting and communication.

Archaeological structures have rarely been defined as tables, benches and stalls. In interpreting the functions of object groups and their allocation to buildings, interpretation as a stall or hall is not very effective. Many postholes structures cannot be interpreted as market stalls due to the size of their ground plans. In comparable archaeological evidence, stalls had a length or width of at least two metres, and more usually of 2.5–3 m. Thus they measured about 2 m at Bad Liebenwerda (Heimerl 2001: 43–52), and single units at St Pölten measured about 3 × 2.5 m (Scherrer 2010: 58–65). The posthole structures on the eastern edge of the Tulln market are smaller, so can be interpreted as tables, benches or racks. Archaeological evidence for racks or *Schrangen* found in Lübeck's butchers' market (*Fleischmarkt*) comes from parallel rows of post-holes (Mührenberg 1996: 26, supplement 3; 31–32, supplement 4), which have been interpreted as racks for the presentation of meat. Thus rows of postholes or disorderly arranged postholes could be seen as indicating the presence of racks, which might have been used to present meat, but also furs or clothes.

These categories are important examples of movable, semi-movable and fixed market structures, though hardly any have been identified

archaeologically to date. Therefore, the classification of archaeological findings may help in interpreting archaeological contexts and structures. Examining the thirteenth-century market at Tulln may help us understand the connection between built space and the use of objects.

In the southeastern part of the market, a particularly high number of finds were made from the market paving. The post-hole structures that dated from the thirteenth century overlapped strongly and were certainly not created at the same time (Fig. 6.9). A combination of different kinds of sources, objects and contexts are helpful in evaluating these structures, which makes the relationship between object and space particularly evident. While consumer research deals with issues concerning access to consumer space (Goodman *et al*. 2010), archaeology is currently faced with the question: Where is what being sold?



Fig. 6.9: Map of the market place, thirteenth century, with market pavements Obj. 235 and 238 and postholes.

The area occupied by the posthole structures mapped out a ground plan measuring thirty metres by ten (Fig. 6.10). Several postholes were grouped so as to map out a rectangle, usually about one metre wide and between 0.90 m and 2 m long. These structures could not have been used as market stalls. It is more likely that they were used as solidly built tables or benches. The vast majority of the posts were arranged in rows. Some were accompanied sometimes by rows of stakeholes.

Therefore, it is likely that the architectural structures to the southeast of the market were not stalls but smaller units consisting of tables and possibly of benches and racks and tent-like structures made of stakes. Goods were offered on the tables of a sort sold in daily or weekly markets, such as meat, bread, fish, cloth, leather or shoes. Meat, fur or cloth may have been offered on special racks.

In the market, certain goods were also placed at specific locations structured by people's actions. The daily market shared its area and built environment with the weekly market rather than the fair because daily practice in a market requires a different kind of infrastructure than a fair. Spatially fixed facilities were used differently than the more flexibly built elements, market stalls were erected in a certain area, and open spaces were used differently than the built-up areas. With products it was similar: goods fulfilling daily and weekly needs were handled differently than festive pastries, and meat was presented differently than vegetables or milk. The archaeological record incorporates this infrastructure. Market stalls serve as evidence of daily actions with goods that needed fixed structures in their infrastructure (meat, implements or fabric) or provide a gastronomic offering. They were also awarded to foreign traders during fairs and could be locked.


Obj. 235
walking layer
pit
curt ruts
post-hole
stake-hole
4
2
0
4 meters
N

Fig. 6.10: Posthole structures in the southeastern part of the thirteenth-century market.

Conclusion: The use of buildings and space in the market

The archaeology of the use of buildings and space in the medieval market in Tulln can be analyzed with the help of theory drawn from, for example, the sociology of space and architecture. In addition, knowledge of written and pictorial sources helps in the interpretation.

On a *physical* level, in terms of the *sociology of architecture*, it is noticeable that all excavated market buildings consisted of wooden structures which are traceable from the twelfth century to the early modern period. The construction of a lime kiln in the fourteenth century was used for the erection of town houses which surrounded the square, but not for market infrastructure. The so-called 'petrification of buildings' was not applied to the market. The kiln marks a link to the infrastructure of the town because lime was needed for the erection of town houses and the city walls. Representative town houses with stone walls and the hall (*Schranne*) were built by the local and public elite (craftsmen, judges, etc.) and were clustered around the market place. The market architecture of the square was retained in the form of wooden constructions during the whole medieval and modern period.

The physical properties of the wooden buildings in the market differed during the medieval and modern periods. The number of movable and semi-movable structures such as tents, racks and tables were particularly high in the high-medieval phases of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth centuries (phases 1–3). After a more stable market infrastructure with paving and a well was installed in the thirteenth century, fixed tables and benches were set up (phases 4–6). In the late medieval of the fourteenth century these buildings were converted into an even more organized structure (phases 7–9). From the fifteenth century on, market buildings are no longer traceable (phases 10–13). Although there were no ground intervention, market stands must have been present, since at this time the number of fairs was extended to three a year. Removable market buildings and pitches without structures determined the extent of the market area up to modern times. The only stone

buildings were the stone walls of a fenced-offarea and a Holy Trinity Column on the square dating to the early modern period.

Analysing the market from the point of view of the *sociology of space* revealed that different areas and buildings in the market had various *functions*. In the first two phases of the market, dating back to the twelfth century, several work spaces and rubbish dumps are evident. Market buildings first occurred in the eastern part of the square from the thirteenth century on and spread all over the site. In the fourteenth century, work spaces were provided for a temporary lime kiln, which here is marked as part of the infrastructural space. In the fifteenth century the western part of the market place was occupied by furnaces.

Open areas and movable elements could be used daily, they were also very important for weekly markets and fairs, as this ensured the flexibility and mobility of traders and their goods. They were suitable for goods which could be offered in baskets or loosely spread on the ground. Extraordinary contexts such as kilns indicate the production of particular goods such as special pastries or drinks on festive occasions (Scholz 2013), demonstrating the *cultural function* of the market, an aspect also linked to objects like dice or tokens.

Archaeological evidence for *organizational processes* was found in the expansion of market buildings and the pavement of the market, which was built in sections. An increasing level of organization of the market by the township is indicated through the establishment of hire-able market stands and the erection of a hall (*Schranne*) as the market's organisational centre. The manorial authority for the market organization cannot be traced in written sources, but the rental income of the stalls was to go to urban or religious organizations.

Social space is rarely documented in archaeological sources: written and pictorial sources indicate that *stationes* (pitches) were often used by female grocers selling special goods as eggs, poultry or fish.

Division in accordance with religious regulations was discussed, as indicated by the mention of Jewish butchers in the butchers' guild's rules in Tulln in the thirteenth century (Eggendorfer 1980; Scholz 2015: chap 8.2.7). However, on the basis of archaeological sources from the Middle Ages, no

differences in the material culture of Jewish and Christian merchants have yet been traced. The existence of space with a religious connotation carrying a distinct *symbolic function* was established recently because of the erection of a Holy Trinity Column at the centre of the square at the end of the seventeenth century. This happened at the same time that monasteries were established near the market at the time of the Counter Reformation. There is no evidence of the negative connotations of space that Davies showed for areas surrounding pillories in medieval markets in England (Davies 2009: 258–259) because of lack of archaeological evidence of pillories in Austrian markets.

Areas with market buildings were structured using different kind of buildings. Pitches, tables and benches could be rented and were used for the sale of different products in different market periods. The pitches or *stationes* were provided for the sale of goods displayed on the ground in baskets or in wagons, such as vegetables, corn, flour and hay. Archaeological traces are rare, but ruts indicate the locations of wagons. Tables were used to offer *Kramwaren* or goods sold by chandlers. These items were used at both weekly markets and fairs.

Certain products were sold at certain fixed locations, the best examples being the thirteenth-century butchers' stalls. The local butchers' guild had the responsibility of maintaining the pavements of the structure. The modification of the posthole structure in the fourteenth century indicates a new function for the building.

Even in the Middle Ages the market was used as a *multifunctional space*. Beside its economic use, the cultural use of space is indicated by the archaeological findings as well as by archaeological contexts. Pictorial and written sources demonstrate that the market was a space where political, religious and social events occurred. In interpreting evidence like unstructured post-hole ensembles, taking this background into account can lead to new interpretations.

Further analysis of the *open space* of the market used methods derived from *space syntax* (Hillier and Hanson 1984: 95–98). First, the open space is not a result of the lack of archaeological record. There is no single proof for building activities in this area at any time from the eleventh to the end of the

seventeenth centuries. For a period of about 600 years, the centre of the square remains without buildings until the Holy Trinity column was installed as a religious and political symbol right in that location. Thus the relationship of built up areas to open space can be analysed using a negative diagram, which documents historical change in the use of open space. While during the twelfth century the market was fully covered with small buildings, from the thirteenth to seventeenth centuries the size of the open space was relatively constant, which means that there was a wide open space in the middle of the square. During all archaeological phases from medieval to modern times there was no building activity in that area which caused any intervention of the ground. Serving the activities of the market functionally, the centre of the square was the place for *stationes* or pitches, which were used as a face-to-face market (Huies and Thompson 1968). As a major element of the market, they are traceable in all phases but had different areal extents.

However, the open space, which was also used as a cultural space, provided room for festivals and events, as well as being a judicial space for hearings and manorial receptions and for religious activities and meetings of various kinds. The open space therefore had a central role in the market square as the most multifunctional area of the market. This was exactly where multiple connections arose between economic, cultural, religious, political and social activities. The market buildings had dedicated uses, tied to certain trades and goods. In the middle of the market, however, many different things took place. In this way the open space proved to be the part of the market that had the greatest integrative function. Here it was possible, spatially and structurally, for the 'outside' – the periphery or regions – to come into contact with the town. The link between the urban space and its trading areas was directly practised within the open space, which therefore seems to be the most multifunctional space of the market, providing opportunities for cultural or religious events, trials and the participation of the various social classes in urban life.

Notes

1. Nürnberg, Hausbücher der Zwölfbrüderstiftung, Amb. 317.2° Folio 109 verso (Mendel I), 1494; Nürnberg, Hausbücher der Zwölfbrüderstiftung, Amb. 317.2° Folio 30 recto (Mendel I), ca. 1425.
2. Lübeck, Marktplatz, about 1580 (source: SLUB Dresden/Deutsche Fotothek/df_ hauptkatalog_0163380, Kaufmannsleben im Mittelalter: Der Markt zu Lübeck um 1580, Verwalter: Lübeck, Stadtbibliothek, Foto: Unbekannter Fotograf).
3. Nürnberg, Hausbücher der Zwölfbrüderstiftung, Amb. 317.2° Folio 109 verso (Mendel I), 1494.

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Chapter 7

The impact of the *kula* on archaeological interpretation: The case of Lapita shell ornaments

Katherine Szabó

Introduction

As an archaeologist working on Palaeolithic and Neolithic deposits in Melanesia, I found the topic of 'Markets as Place' especially challenging. Indeed, it presented challenges on two levels. First, the notion of a 'market' as construed in economic terms has limited applicability to most of the span of the prehistoric archaeological record. Secondly, when the study area takes in several thousand kilometers of which the vast majority is ocean, 'place' is not a simple concept. Pacific archaeologists talk of 'seascapes' and of the sea as a bridge rather than a barrier (e.g. Gosden and Pavlides 1994; McNiven 2004), but even so, studying the spatial construction of markets presents logistical challenges far beyond those seen in most other quarters of the world. Despite this, one of the most significant and far-reaching ethnographic studies of trade and exchange derives from this region: Bronisław Malinowski's study of the *kula* trade ring of the Trobriand Islands of eastern Papua New Guinea. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (Malinowski 1922) not only established the practice of fieldwork through intensive participant observation within the developing discipline of anthropology, it also became a key reference point for those studying economic systems, whether from within anthropology or beyond its disciplinary borders.

In *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, Malinowski (1922) describes the clockwise and anticlockwise trading circuits that link together a series of islands of the Massim region (Fig. 7.1). The primary articles being traded are two types of shell valuable, *soulava* and *mwali*, the former a necklace of shell beads with suspended shells and shell fragments (Fig. 7.1a), the latter a coneshell (*Conus* sp.) armlet with shell beads and shell fragments suspended like a tassel from a drilled hole near the shell's aperture (Fig. 7.1b). Since Malinowski's original publication, nearly a century of continuous scholarship on the structure and dynamics of the *kula* has revisited and revised many aspects of it, including gender (e.g. Weiner 1976), the interpersonal dynamics of exchange (e.g. Weiner 1992), the impacts of colonialism (e.g. Macintyre 1983) and the construction and transformation of value (Munn 1986), among many others. Of particular note here was an early challenge from Mauss (1954), issued through his seminal work *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. Stressing the non-economic character of some exchange, Mauss's formulation of the movement of objects through gift-giving emphasized social cohesion and bonds formed by reciprocity.

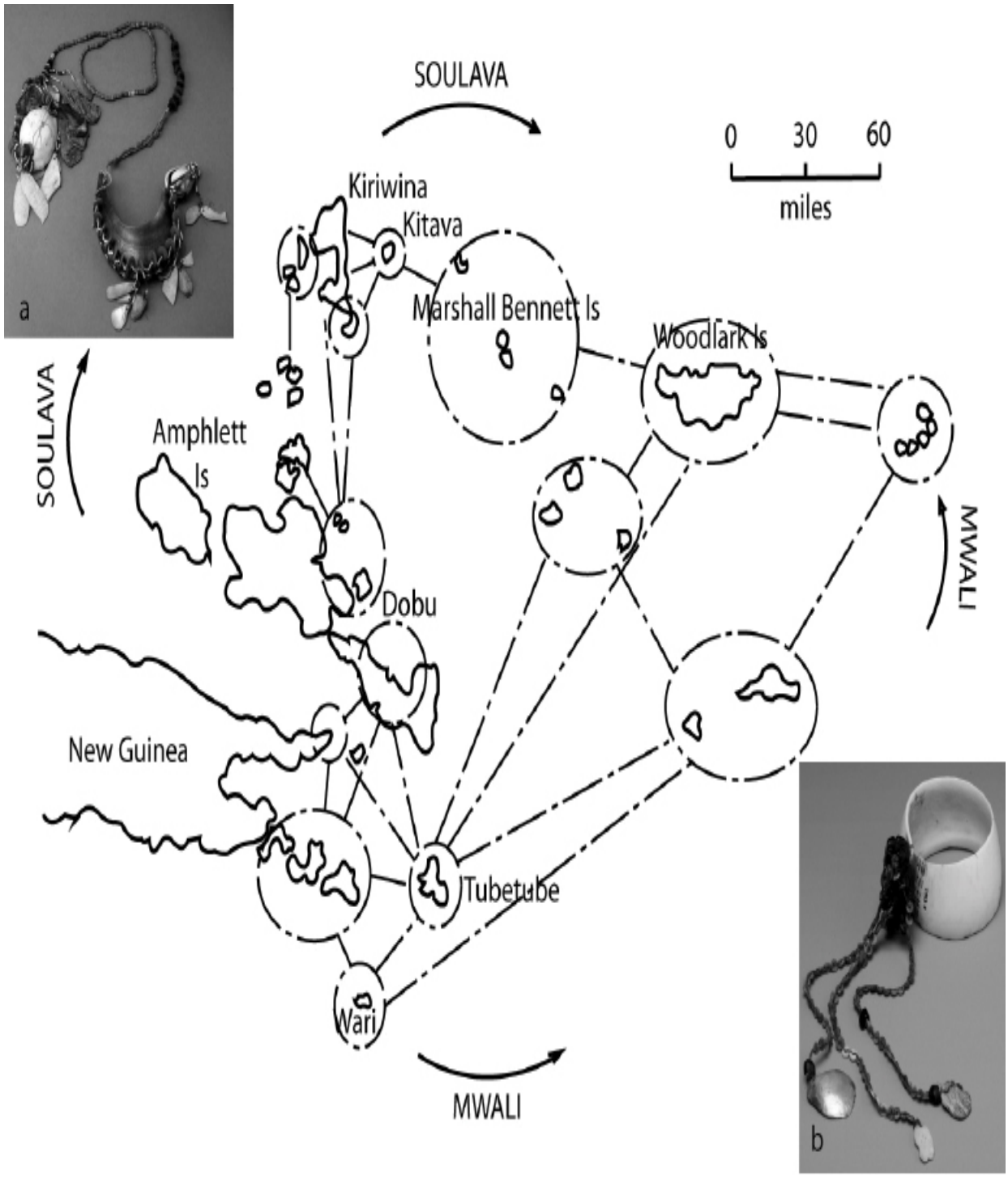


Fig. 7.1: Map of Kula Exchange circle (map by the author, photos by the author from objects at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA), University of Cambridge).

Recognizing and understanding the movement of objects has long been a key concern for archaeologists, whether such objects are thought of as a

proxy for the movement of people across the landscape, or as traded raw materials or finished goods. It comes as little surprise, then, that one of the best-known case studies in anthropology has occasionally been co-opted for archaeological interpretation, often well beyond the geographical borders of its ethnographic context. Levered as the archetypal model of 'gift exchange', the structure and function of the *kula* has been used to interpret aspects of Mycenaean exchange networks (Voutsaki 1997). Also drawing on the principles of reciprocal exchange explicitly exemplified by some interpretations of the *kula,* van de Noort (2006) draws parallels between British Bronze Age traders and seafarers and the *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (Malinowski 1922) and refers to the British seafarers he is discussing as 'Argonauts of the North Sea'. The *kula* is also used as a prototype by Earle (2002) in his modelling of Bronze Age economies, and Tilley (1996) draws on it in his influential *An Ethnography of the Neolithic*. These are just a handful of examples drawn from a much larger range of (largely Anglo-European) archaeological literature (see also Spriggs 2008).

How far such ethnographic analogies and presumed parallels are instructive for diffuse times and places is an issue addressed further below, but for the purposes of this chapter I would like to consider whether such analogies between past and present actually work in Melanesia itself. There have been manifold investigations and considered assessments of the impacts of European colonial practices, the introduction of Christianity and introduced diseases on Melanesia, and indeed on the *kula* ring in particular (e.g. Groube 1977; Macintyre 1994). Despite these clear historical contingencies, it has been suggested that Neolithic Melanesian shell ornaments coincide with, or are at least embryonic versions of, *kula* valuables. The preeminent Pacific archaeologist Patrick Kirch has proposed on several occasions that certain types of shell artefacts associated with the Lapita cultural complex can be considered to be not only trade valuables, but precursors of the high-ranking *soulava* and *mwali* of the *kula* ring.

In the heartland: Lapita *kula* valuables in Melanesia?

The Lapita cultural complex is a highly recognizable archaeological horizon found across the Island Melanesian and West Polynesian region, stretching

from New Guinea in the west to Samoa in the east (Fig. 7.2). After the earliest Lapita sites appeared in the Bismarck Archipelago, north of the New Guinea mainland, around 3300 years ago, Lapita seafarers quickly spread eastwards colonizing the islands of Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa for the first time. Lapita sites are typically coastal villages characterized by earthenware pottery decorated with bands of dentate-stamped motifs, along with characteristic shell artifact types and often obsidian brought or traded from faraway sources (Kirch 1997; Spriggs 1997; Specht *et al*. 2014).

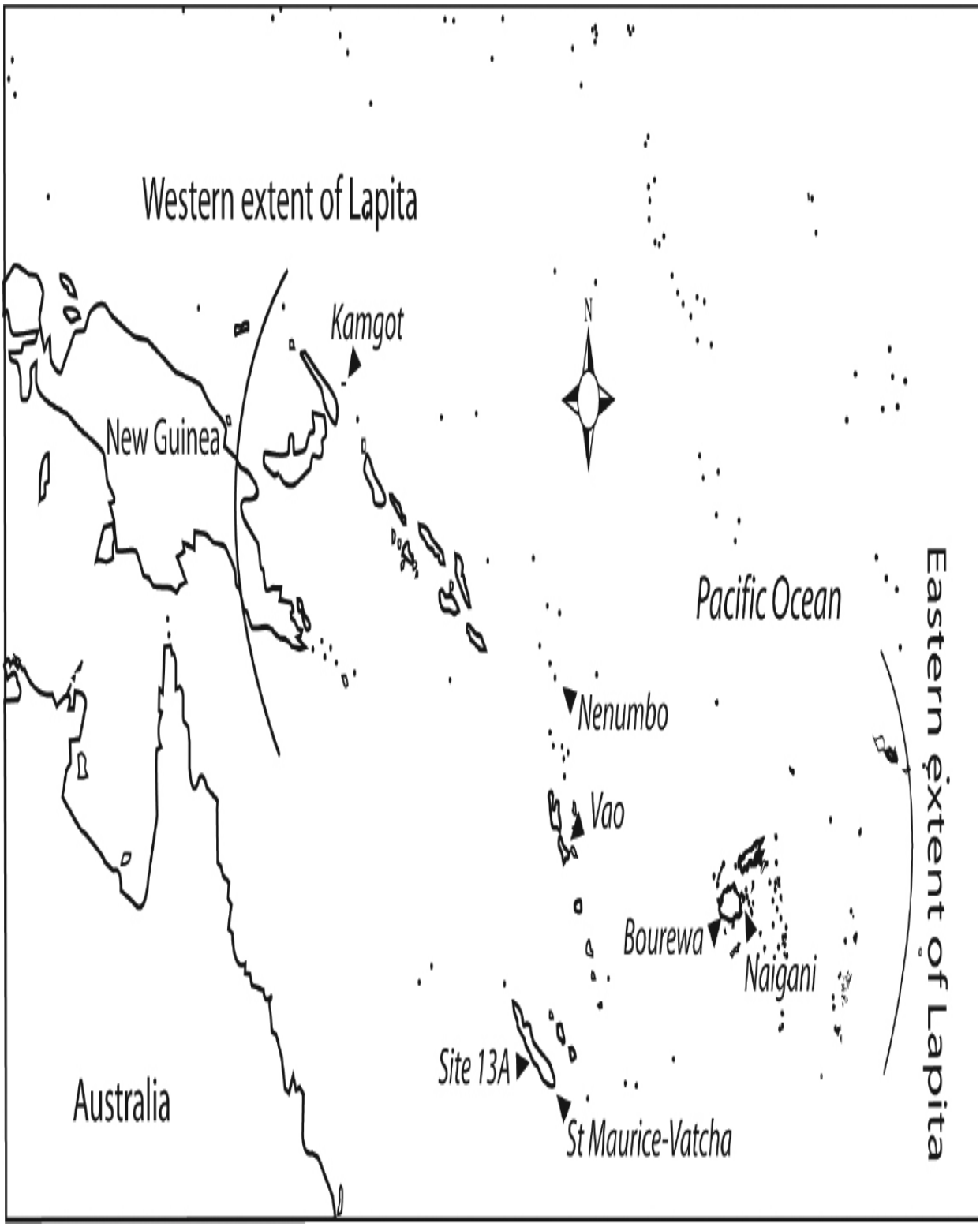


Fig. 7.2: Geographic extent of the Lapita cultural complex showing locations of major sites mentioned in the text.

Partially due to a lack of good quality stone resources, Lapita worked shell assemblages are both large and diverse, and tend to contain a range of tools and ornaments. A full discussion of Lapita shell artifact types and occurrences can be found in Szabó (2010; see also Kirch 1988). Lapita shell artifacts have been discussed intensively over a number of years by leading Pacific archaeologist Patrick Kirch. In the course of publishing the first detailed treatment of them, Kirch (1988) suggested that many of these objects could have functioned as prestige trade goods analogous to those recorded for the *kula*:

Lapita assemblages also contain a variety of shell objects usually classified as beads, pendants, bracelet segments, rings, and similar descriptive categories under the general rubric 'ornaments'. However, virtually every one of these artefact classes has direct ethnographic equivalents that functioned as valued items of exchange. Indeed, as the classic shell armrings (mwali) and necklaces (soulava) of the kula network illustrate, shell valuables were frequently the most prestigious objects of exchange in a given network, and the focus of political intrigue and ritual effort. Since virtually every one of the Lapita archaeological shell object classes has formal equivalents in ethnographically-documented exchange valuables, it is surprising that Oceanic archaeologists have neglected these objects in the context of Lapita prestige-good exchange. (Kirch 1988: 107–108)

Applying this argument beyond the *kula* in a later paper, Kirch (1991: 155) suggested that Lapita shell ornaments 'can be considered prototypes of the "shell money" ethnographically documented for Melanesia'. These ideas have subsequently been picked up by anthropologists and others who have incorporated them into their understandings of the ancient Pacific. For example, Liep (2007: 33) comments that 'the Lapita people maintained an extensive and highly connected trade network from Manus to New Caledonia that lasted until about 2000 BP'.

Kirch's (1988) initial conclusions about a trade in shell valuables were not made in a vacuum of evidence. He hypothesized that, if ornaments are made for trade, there should be evidence of production, but few finished artifacts at manufacturing centres, while at receiving locations there should

be evidence of finished artifacts but no evidence of production. A summary of the evidence available at the time supported the interpretation of a trade in these ornaments by showing production locations and sites where artifacts had been recovered with no evidence of shell-working (see Table 7.1).

Table 7.1: Major Lapita shell artefact types and their occurrences at analyzed sites as published in Kirch (1988).

Class	*Mussau, Admiralty Islands*	*R-F2 Reef/Santa Cruz Islands*	*Malo, Vanautu*	*TK-4 Tikopia*	*13A Lapita*	*Naigani Fiji*	*Yanuca Fiji*	*Lakeba, Lau*	*Tongatapu*	*Niuatoputapu*
Tridacna long units	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	xm	xm	0
Spondylus long units	xm	0	0	x	0	0	0	0	0	x
Conus rectangular units	xm	x	0	0	x	0	0	xm	x	0
Conus rings	xm	xm	(x)	xm	x	xm	x	xm	x	x
Tridacna rings	xm	0	(x)	(0)	(0)	0	(x)	x(m)	x	x
Trochus rings	0	0	(x)	x	0	0	0	xm	0	0
Conus discs	xm	x	0	0	(0)	x(m)	0	x	x	x
Conus beads	xm	x	x	xm	x	xm	0	xm	x	0
Spondylus beads	xm	0	0	x	0	(x)	0	0	0	x
Pendants	xm	0	0	x	0	0	0	0	(0)	0

Key: x = present, 0 = absent, m indicates evidence of manufacturing, ( ) indicates uncertainty.

Retesting the hypothesis: Lapita shell ornaments as trade valuables?

From the point of view of anthropological writings about the *kula*, archaeologists can rarely distinguish between valued gifts (*sensu* Mauss) and commodified valuables (*sensu* Malinowski). Nevertheless, we can investigate whether Lapita shell ornaments moved between locations at all. In the absence of movement, any argument suggesting long-distance trade or a *kula* ring becomes unsustainable. Here I summarize the relevant results of my analyses and re-analyses of Lapita worked shell assemblages with a particular eye on establishing the evidence for, and nature of, manufacture (Table 7.2).

Re-analysis of the worked shell from Nenumbo (RF-2) (Reef Islands, southeast Solomon Islands), the re-excavated Lapita type site 13A (Grande Terre, New Caledonia) and the re-excavated Naigani site in Fiji (Szabó 2005) show some differences from the original results presented in Kirch (1988). Evidence of local manufacture was found in nearly all classes of identified shell artifact types that were present. Additional analyses from the large early Lapita site of Kamgot (New lreland, Papua New Guinea; Szabó and Summerhayes 2002; Szabó 2005) and St Maurice-Vatcha (Isle of Pines, New Caledonia; Szabó 2005) add further data to support the pattern of extensive evidence of the local production and consumption of shell artifacts.

Where this pattern does not hold is towards most easterly reaches of the Lapita domain. This is evident from the original table presented in Kirch (1988), where sites in the Kingdom of Tonga show little evidence for shell artifact production, and this is confirmed by the more recently excavated and analyzed Fijian site of Bourewa (Szabó 2006; Perrette 2011). The core shell species used as raw materials are still available in these archipelagos, so production was not restricted by unavailability of raw materials. Scrutinizing these three sites, they all share the common feature of being early in the settlement sequence of the eastern Lapita range. Slightly later sites, as exemplified by Yanuca in Kirch's table, reproduced here as Figure 7.3, as well as the various Fijian sites reported in Clark and Anderson (2009),

contain very low frequencies of shell artifacts as many of the older traditions fall away. This pattern of frequent shell artifacts but little evidence of production in earlier eastern sites, and few shell artifacts with no evidence of production in slightly later eastern sites, suggests that quantities of shell artifacts were brought with the initial settlers but that over time they were steadily depleted and eventually disappeared. This interpretation is supported by data from curation patterns, where extant artifacts are reworked and recycled rather than simply discarded when they become broken or overly worn.

Table 7.2: The range of major Lapita shell artifact types and their occurrences at analyzed sites based on (re)analyses by Szabó.

Class	*Mussau*	*R-F2 Reef/Santa Cruz*	*Malo Vanautu*	*TK-4 Tikopia*	*13A Lapita*	*Naigani Fiji*	*Yanuca Fiji*	*Lakeba, Lau*	*Tongatapu*	*Niuatoputapu*
Tridacna long units	0	0	0	0	**x**	0**m**	0	xm	xm	0
Spondylus long units	xm	0	0	x	0	0	0	0	0	x
Conus rectangular units	xm	x**m**	0	0	x**m**	0	0	xm	x	0
Conus rings	xm	xm	(x)	xm	x**m**	xm	x	xm	x	x
Tridacna rings	xm	0	(x)	(0)	(0)	0	(x)	x(m)	x	x
Trochus rings	0	**x**	(x)	0	**xm**	0	0	xm	0	0
Conus discs	xm	**0**	0	(0)	**0**	**0**	0	x	x	x
Conus beads	xm	x	x	x	x	xm	0	xm	x	0
Spondylus beads	xm	0	0	x	0	**0**	0	0	0	x
Pendants	xm	**x(m)**	0	x	0	0	0	0	(0)	0

Key: x = present, 0 = absent, m indicates evidence of manufacturing, ( ) indicates uncertainty. Entries in bol represent modifications of Kirch's original (1988) results.


a
cm
b
c

Fig. 7.3: Broad Conus rings and curated sections from the Bourewa Lapita site, Viti Levu Island, Fiji. (a) ring section curated once with four drilled, and extensively worn holes (artefact 211, AreaC13A, 40–50cm depth); (b) ring section curated twice with one set of broken drill-holes and one set of complete ones on the left-hand side (artefact 6, AreaX2, 60–70cm depth); (c) ring section curated three times, with two broken and one complete drill-hole in the top right corner (artefact 17, AreaX3, 90–100cm depth).

Dynamism in role rather than movement

Originally, all morphologically distinct shell artifacts found within the Lapita repertoire were considered to be different 'types', manufactured using a distinct method of production and used in a specific way (*châine opératoire*). However, as studies have progressed and more material has been analysed, it has become increasingly clear that some 'types' are in fact reworked versions of other 'types'. Thus, the '*Conus* rectangular units' of Kirch's table are in fact reworked and drilled segments of broken broad *Conus* rings (Szabó 2005; 2010; Fig. 7.3). This finding has clear implications for our understanding of early eastern Lapita shell artifact assemblages, with the Bourewa assemblage providing a good case in point.

Narrow rings in *Conus* sp. shell tend to be the most common type of shell artifact recovered from Lapita sites across its entire spatio-temporal range (Szabó 2010), and the extensive excavations at Bourewa uncovered 143 of these. Broad *Conus* sp. rings are less common, more difficult and more time-consuming to produce, and are the type which tends to be curated upon breakage (Szabó 2010). Bourewa yielded 82 of this type of artifact, of which 51 showed evidence of curation. Curation took the form of drilling multiple holes in the ring fragment so that it could be either suspended in pendant fashion or incorporated into a composite artifact as a component, sometimes accompanied by the grinding of broken edges. At Bourewa such curation episodes were sometimes undertaken multiple times, with 22 broad *Conus* ring fragments showing evidence of one curation episode, 23 showing two episodes and five showing three or more curation episodes. This evidence for remodelling and reuse is contrasted with only 23 fragments of *Conus* sp. shell definitively related to initial ring production (i.e. with evidence of cutting and/or grinding) recovered from the site. There is no evidence of the

curation of narrow *Conus* rings, although there are some examples of curated narrow rings made from *Tridacna* sp. (giant clam).

This high level of curation relative to the production of *Conus* rings at Bourewa contrasts sharply with the results of analysis from the early Lapita site of Kamgot, located in New Ireland, Bismarck Archipelago, at the western edge of the distribution of Lapita sites. Although excavations were smaller in scale than at Bourewa, Kamgot yielded 47 narrow *Conus* sp. rings, but only a single example of a broad *Conus* ring, which was curated. These totals are in addition to 32 identified fragments of cut or ground débitage from *Conus* ring production, which would seem to indicate high relative levels of production.

These results are broadly indicative of a focus on production in early, more westerly Lapita sites and curation at later, more easterly Lapita sites. There is little in the data to suggest that artifact production and consumption are not local, with the only clear scenario for the movement of objects being the transport of material with the original colonists. The high level of curation in the east clearly points to artifacts being kept in active use for a longer period of time, in some cases well beyond any clear aesthetic appeal that the objects may originally have possessed. In sum, there appears to be little evidence that Lapita shell valuables were either traded or commodified, but there are clear patterns related to value, as well as evidence of shifts in these patterns over time and space. If not trade, then what can such patterns mean?

The patterns of reuse seen in early eastern Lapita sites coincide well with the patterns we would expect to see with heirlooming behaviour. As Thomas noted (1976: 128), ‘old things are sometimes retained anachronistically, maintaining and reifying ties with the past’. The concept of heirlooming not only explains the increasing wish to keep artifacts in circulation, it also suggests an interpretation that is counterposed to the idea of far-flung communities connected by trade networks. Connections and the idea of ‘community’ were not (or at least not regularly) reinforced through physical contact and the exchange of goods; rather, remembered connections were materialized through the maintenance of ancestral objects. In this sense, curated shell valuables acted as materialized memory, as mnemonics.

Conclusion

Archaeologists cannot study what ancient people intended to do, only what they actually did do. As a discipline, archaeology relies solely on the physical remains of past cultural behaviors. Often the reasons behind particular actions are, and will remain, inaccessible. In this sense, there is often a lack of fit between what anthropology expects of archaeology (often, it seems, a sort of 'prehistoric ethnography') and what archaeology can actually provide given the nature of its data. In the absence of physical observation or written accounts, the only way in which we can assess 'trade' or 'exchange' is by seeing whether or not artifacts are moving from their point of production. There is no clear way to distinguish between gifts, commodities or named, circulating prestige objects in a prehistoric context. Indeed, such distinctions become semantic if it is demonstrated that the objects are made at every site and are not moving at all.

Nevertheless, there are some ways forward. As Kirch pointed out (1988), production centers should contain extensive evidence of artifact manufacture with little evidence of finished artifacts, while receiving locations should show the opposite pattern. Current data suggest that this is not the case for Lapita shell ornaments, with evidence of production being common across sites and not concentrated at a few. The exception is early sites in the eastern reaches of the Lapita range, where the evidence for production is minimal, but for artifact curation extensive. These results suggest that different social processes are at play, and instead of trade linking communities, it is ancestral memories reified in shell valuables that are providing the connection.

Being unable to observe social dynamics directly, archaeology must look to other disciplines to offer models of social processes and often infer their material manifestations from these. While the scale and nature of the archaeological record allows archaeologists to see the action of social processes at a scale that is frequently invisible to those in the contemporary social sciences (see Bailey 2007), it does not allow us either the fine-grained temporal resolution or the insights into underlying thought processes that are available to anthropologists. With this in mind, and as a Pacific archaeologist working in the *kula*'s geographical domain, it is unclear to me exactly what archaeologists working in other quarters of the world hope achieve in terms

of interpretation by drawing on the *kula* as an analogy to explain the distribution of archaeological materials. The anthropology of the *kula* is complicated and contested and, because of the nature of the archaeological remains, the vast majority of these complexities will remain opaque to archaeologists. In respect of the Lapita example given here, it is hard to see how even the basic distinction between Malinowski's functionalism and Mauss's theory of gift exchange could be distinguished archaeologically.

Complications are increased when specific social models and explanations are shifted through space and time into radically different landscapes that doubtless have different logistical geographies and available resources. The example of the Lapita cultural complex discussed here demonstrates that, even when there are very similar artifacts in the same geographical area, interpretation is not so simple. Indeed, drawing on the *kula* analogy to cast light on Lapita shell valuables seems to obscure an altogether different story which speaks less to long-distance trade reinforcing social networks than it does to a society that is potentially stretched beyond the limits of geographical cohesion. The shell artifact evidence suggests that 'Lapita' is recreated through memory rather than trade.

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PART II

Anthropological and historical approaches

Chapter 8

Markets in West Africa: Karl Polanyi, or what sort of social formation

Mahir Şaul

Introduction

The 1962 publication of *Markets in Africa* opened a new phase in the study of African economic anthropology and economic history. The Introduction to the volume, which was written by Paul Bohannan and George Dalton, made the argument that markets and trade, although historically ubiquitous, especially in West Africa, were not evidence for the operation of a 'market principle' in economic life. 'Market' had different meanings, and in the case of Africa, what was meant by this word was physical locations where sellers and buyers gathered, that is, 'market places' with social functions different from markets in the west. This clarification was a major advance in overcoming some theoretical difficulties that had beset the study of pre-modern economies and the ethnography of societies that had come under colonial domination at the turn of the twentieth century.

Key terms in this introduction and in the larger perspective of the discussion were inspired by the writings of Karl Polanyi. The latter's *The Great Transformation*, published toward the end of World War II, had outlined the history of the rise of industrial 'market society' in western Europe and its implications for the catastrophic breakdown of western civilization in the form of the two world wars that had marked the first half of the century. Polanyi's book, despite its lasting appeal to a wide range of

the reading public, was not a prime text for anthropologists, nor was it included in Africanist curriculums. Nonetheless it continues to be a book to which economic anthropologists return, and the discussion in this chapter on nineteenth-century markets in the West African savannah and their connection to the total economy is partly undertaken in its shadow.

After the Second World War, Polanyi was invited to the US and had a second career split between New York and Canada. During this time, his attention turned more fully to topics that had been present but secondary in his pre-war work: Greek and Near Eastern antiquities, and West African–Atlantic economic history. Some brilliant students of the younger generation took his classes or became admiring disciples when they became acquainted with his work. They were the conduit through which the ideas of *The Great Transformation* and Polanyi's new research in other parts of the world were transmitted to sociocultural anthropology and archaeology. One argument made in the book stood out strongly: in the course of most human history, the economy had been 'embedded' in social life, until a new normative ideal took hold in the early nineteenth century, and powerful circles argued that the economy ought to be 'disembedded,' that is, divorced from political and social considerations and allowed to run autonomously, a program that was partially realized in new institutional arrangements. The moral force of *The Great Transformation* derived from Polanyi's demonstration that this development had led to social disaster. Academic research undertaken in the US in the 1950s and 1960s under Polanyi's influence was instead directed to providing examples of 'embeddedness' in pre-modern situations. Polanyi took upon himself the task of supplying proof from areas of the world and periods that were narrow specializations, and he highlighted certain cases in particular as challenges because they appeared to contradict the premises of his argument.

A couple of additional terms are central and will become necessary for the exposition in this chapter. Polanyi emphasized that the chief characteristic of 'market society' was the 'self-regulating market,' an expression he popularized as another way of saying what neoclassical economists mean by general equilibrium. In a society that has a competitive market operating without political interference, the profit motives of actors

and price fluctuations ensure that supply and demand adjust to each other and come to a balance. The adjustment happens simultaneously in the prices of both produced goods and the factors of production used to produce them (labour and capital). In the 1920s, the University of Vienna was home to a group of economists proposing new ideas and methods of analysis, part of a larger international trend that came to be known as neoclassical economics. They considered this balance, which was achieved through competition, to be an optimum situation. Polanyi, who was working as a young journalist in Vienna at that time, was part of the left opposition and disagreed. He developed ideas rejecting the measure of efficiency, suggesting alternatives that stressed social solidarity and planning, and focusing on the social dislocation that resulted from free-market policies (Rosner 1990; Polanyi-Levitt 2000). These counter-arguments became a blueprint for his later academic work.

The second set of terms associated with the idea of the self-regulating market is ‘price-making markets’ and its correlate, ‘market-made prices’ (Neale 1957). These labels designate fluctuating prices resulting from the preferences of large numbers of buyers, prices that regulate the supply of goods and also channel the demand for goods. When all such markets are connected to one another, the rise in the price of a good brings higher cost producers of that good to the market as sellers, or convinces other people who are holders of this good but have so far kept it to themselves to offer it for sale. In such markets buying decisions also depend on prices. The makers of goods decide how to use factors of production (capital or wage labour) depending on their relative prices. Thus, fluctuations in ‘market-made prices’ condition production and consumption decisions, as small adjustments move supply and demand to a position of equilibrium.

There is one more idea to set out, before I proceed with my principal subject matter, in anticipation of a critical view that will be discussed later in the chapter: the self-regulating market requires ‘price-making markets’ and ‘market-made prices’ as its logical bedrock. But if ‘market-made price’ is conceived narrowly (in other words, if it does not already include by definition the self-equilibrium of the entire economy), the reverse does not hold true. There may be situations in which a large number of people buy

and sell goods without constraint in a market (place), and from these transactions market-clearing prices form. But this process may be limited to this market island only. The play of supply and demand will not automatically produce the coordination of all such markets. It will also not necessarily produce price fluctuations in the factors of production (labour, land or interest rates for money), or even pricing for them. This means that one cannot deduce a progression toward a 'self-regulating market' from 'market-made prices' alone.

In this chapter I examine one topic of West African economic history, namely its active trade, limiting myself to the region of the savannah circumscribed by the large bend of the Niger River, but considering also the long-distance relations of this region with the forest belt in the south and its trans-Saharan connections to the north. I present ethnographic descriptions derived mostly from the nineteenth-century travel literature to address the following questions: Do the formulations that economic anthropology offered in its 1960s heyday provide a comprehensive account of West African savannah economic history, or clarify the underlying theoretical issues? Are there alternatives ways in the social sciences to conceptualize the economic organization of pre-modern West Africa without losing the gains that have been made in that period? My expertise lies in the highlands of the Mouhoun (Black Volta) basin, which now forms the western part of Burkina Faso, and the adjacent areas of northern Côte d'Ivoire and eastern Mali, which historically communicated closely with it; when appropriate I also draw on the literature of a wider part of West Africa.

Long distance trade

In January 1828, the humble French traveller René Caillé, who had spent five wretched weeks in Tieme suffering from multiple infirmities, finally felt well enough to join a trade convoy, which took him to the city of Jenne, a stopover on his journey to Timbuktu.[1] The convoy, he wrote:

was made up of forty-five to fifty Mandingos who carried loads on their head, about thirty-five women who likewise carried loads and eight convoy heads [*chefs*] who drove their donkeys; there were fifteen donkeys. The

convoy heads have their slaves and their wives who carry the luggage and, when they come to rest for the evening, cook for everyone in the convoy. The women walk in the front, the men follow them. The men have bells [suspended by the dozens on the collar of their donkeys], and the tinkling of these bells announces the arrival of the convoy. The Mandingo relish the sound of these bells, and it entertains them on the road. They either fashion these bells themselves, with iron and copper bought in Jenne and in other markets on the banks of the Niger, or they purchase them ready made. When they arrive in a village the women go to fetch water and pound the millet to prepare dinner for everyone, after which they warm water in big borrowed containers for the men to bathe. Then they pound millet once again for supper. The slaves are in charge of fetching firewood for cooking. The free black men are absolved from all this burden. They lie down and rest while waiting for dinner to be served. Afterwards they go up and down the village with a few cola nuts, which they put in a calabash to exchange for cowries. With this they buy grain to feed the convoy. In their free time the women spin cotton, which they buy with the kola nuts that their husbands gave them. I saw them doing this at night with a lamp burning vegetable fat. The thread they make is the little advantage they can draw; when they arrive in Jenne they sell the thread for cowrie shells and buy salt and glass beads. The women are also in charge of washing the men's clothes. After their rest the men spend some time checking the loads of kola nuts, especially the ones that have fallen from the back of the donkey to the ground while they were travelling on the road. They wrap the loads in fresh leaves to preserve the nuts. Then they walk in the streets of the village to sell lengths of fabric that were made in their village. They also take care of paying the toll fees, because all foreign merchants, no matter how many in the convoy, need to make a little payment jointly in the places where they spend the night. The amount may vary but is usually fixed at twenty kola nuts per charge, which is equivalent to two hundred cowrie shells (twenty French shillings). (Caillé 1979: 52–53)

The convoy described in these pages was what the Manding-speaking traders of the savannah (*julari*) called a 'small caravan' (*sere-fitini*), as

opposed to a ‘large caravan’ (*sere-ba*). The large caravans would include hundreds of traders, thousands of slaves and a significant number of unburdened armed men to protect them.

The traders that Caillé described were anxious about changes in the prices of the goods that they carried. For example, they pursued the slightest rumour about the going rate for kola nuts in Jenne and San, the towns where they were heading, and when they stopped they inquired about them more thoroughly. If the prices were unfavourable, they were ready to change their destination on the spur of the moment, in order to avoid making a sale at a loss (Person 1968: 113). In fact, 5 days after the beginning of the trip, in Tengrela, Caillé received an announcement that greatly upset him.[2] The trader who was acting as his guide told him that he had decided to change destination.

As soon as he arrived, without wasting any time, my guide went to find out about the prices of the goods. He learned that in Jenne kola nut prices were very low. For that reason, he decided to go to Sansanding [instead of Jenne]. He told me of this decision, which troubled me a lot. (Caillé 1979: 65)

The guide’s decision was well grounded. Later in his account, when Caillé described Jenne, he noted that those who had brought kola nuts for sale had a hard time finding buyers. Although a large quantity of kola nuts was consumed in the area, the enormous supplies that traders arriving from the south had brought with them had depressed prices to eight or ten cowries apiece.[3] When the costs for food, the tolls and the other expenses of the trip were taken into account, at these prices the kola traders could not make a profit (Caillé 1979: 153).

Caillé was sensitive to the details of these transactions partly because in his travels he supported himself by trading, exchanging for his needs the goods he had brought for this purpose, some of which he had to sell at a loss. This picture of West African trade is consistent with the descriptions made 27 years later by the German explorer Heinrich Barth and 60 years

later by the French explorer Gustave Binger. Binger went through many of the same areas as Caillé, although in different political circumstances.

The markets of the West African savannah region drew several types of actors. The professional traders that Caillé describes were one type, constituting a kind of dispersed trading diaspora, which today is recognized as an ethnicity (Jula). Ties of religion (Islam in an environment where most agricultural communities were not Muslim), language (Manding) and place of origin inspired trust and solidarity among the traders and defined the boundary beyond which there was stereotyping and rivalry. Caillé felt closer to another group of traders, those of North African origin who had connections to places such as the Moroccan town of Tafilalt. On account of his pale white skin, which stood out even in the company of North Africans, and the story that he concocted to explain it of his supposed Egyptian and Alexandrian origins, this preference was perhaps not surprising. He also communicated in Arabic, which from his transcriptions appears to have been barely adequate, but he could converse in it fluently. Somehow overlapping with cultural and geographical belonging was a hierarchy of wealth and scale of business, and there were enormous differences in wealth.

Gustave Binger has left us an affectionate description of the modest traders who were at the bottom of the scale. After providing a broad regional panorama of differences in wholesale kola-nut prices between the major market towns of a vast area lying between what is now western Côte d'Ivoire and eastern Ghana, he wrote:

It would be interesting to figure out the profit that a husband and wife team could derive by engaging in this trade. The couple, leaving Kong with a trifling of goods consisting of irons or textiles worth locally twenty francs, could obtain in Kintampo or Bonduku about five thousand kola nuts, which they can sell in Bobo-Dioulasso. With the proceeds of this trade he buys two bars of salt. He will take only one and a half bars back to Kong, the other half being needed to buy gifts to take with him to his hometown and to pay for their food during travel. The trip from Kong to Kintampo, from Kintampo to Bobo-Dioulasso and back to Kong will take about one hundred

days. The one and a half bars of salt being in Kong equivalent to a value of 240 francs, the couple will have earned 220 francs, that is, 2.20 francs per day, or 1.10 francs per person per day, excluding the costs.

One has to imagine the life of these people. They walk carrying 30 or 40 kilograms each and keep at it for the longest part of the day. When they arrive at the stopover one has to pound the grain and prepare dinner, cut firewood and fetch water, often from a distance of several kilometres. If there is child, the woman carries it on her back. They have no hearth or home. If they are caught in the rain they keep going, braving it without complaint. When a black man works with his wife for one year, at the end of the year he buys a slave. This is the most profitable purchase he could make. The slave becomes an assistant in his work and lives the same way as his owner. In this shared life, the comforts of some benefit others as well. And if it happens that the slave runs away, the owner does not get discouraged. 'It is the will of the All-Mighty' he says in resignation. 'I will prosper, God willing.' And he starts all over again. (Binger 1892, I: 313)

Some footpaths in the West Volta region were well travelled in the late nineteenth century, as attested by another of Binger's observations. On his way from Kong to Bobo-Dioulasso during the dry season of 1888, in a period of 20 days, he came across 303 carriers with loads of goods to sell on their head, 62 donkeys and 20 oxen of burden (Binger 1892, II: 372).

A traveller was not likely to encounter the merchants who occupied the top of the social ladder on these footpaths. Unlike the itinerant traders who hawked their goods in the market places they visited, rich merchants were stationary, staying in one place, but cultivating wide regional networks, which brought them information and the ability to make offers to distant trade partners of rare or valuable merchandise that had come their way. Caillé described them in the pages of his account of the city of Jenne. The richest among the merchants were 30 or 40 'Moorish' men, who lived in the most beautiful houses, built near the market. They conducted the wholesale trade of the most expensive commodities and banded together in companies to ship boatloads of food grains to Timbuktu. They did not have to run their own trade shops because they had trusted men, sometimes their slaves, who

did the retailing for them. They only sat on a mat spread in front of their house, displaying bars of salt and waiting for people to come to them to buy their goods or to offer them goods for sale. Thus, without spending too much effort, they were able to acquire large quantities of major commodities: ivory, gold, rice and millet, beeswax, locally woven textiles, and the small local onions. They stored these goods in their warehouses and periodically expedited them to Timbuktu to their agents, who bought for them in return salt bars, tobacco and imports from Europe (Caillé 1979 [1830]: 145–146).

Next came the traders who were the native inhabitants of Jenne. They purchased and bulked produce brought from the villages of the region, such as tamarinds, peppers, baobab fruits, dried hibiscus leaves and calyces, peanuts and beeswax to make candles. They then shipped these goods, and large clay pots and calabashes, to Timbuctu (Caillé 1979 [1830]: 146; Desplagnes 1907: 345–347).

Wholesale or high-value trade was separated from retail. The largest values changed hands in seclusion from prying eyes, in the privacy of the merchants' compounds and the warehouses built around the market, rather than in the stalls of the market place (Person 1968: 119; Meillassoux 1971: 190).

The historian Yves Person gives two examples of large-scale trading from the highlands of Buré and from Kankan, both now in eastern Guinea (Person 1968: 116–120). Major merchants such as these two (*jago-tigi*) could organize caravans incorporating several thousand people, which were capable of going through insecure areas while carrying goods of great value because they had the protection of armed companies. Planning such expeditions required a lot of forethought on account of the difficulty of lining up layover points at distances that could be covered by a 1-day walk and that could supply the large quantities of food and water that were needed for such large gatherings of people and animals. The donkeys were small but sturdy; according to Binger they carried a charge of 70–80 kg and walked at about 3 km an hour. That comes to 16–18 km daily between layovers, while Méniaud at the beginning of the twentieth century reported that donkeys walked 30 km daily (Binger 1892, I: 88; Méniaud 1912, II:

118–119). People carried about 25 kg on their head, the weight of a head charge of kola nuts (Person 1968: 113), and also walked on average 25 km a day. However, traders who carried their own goods and their spouses took heavier loads, like a load of kola nuts or a salt bar section weighing 35–40 kg (Mauny 1961: 396).

A large caravan might be a joint venture between several major merchants. They would then share the expenses for organization and defence and divide up the profits in proportion to the contribution each had made to that cost. The minor traders who participated in these larger ventures were made to contribute by paying a flat fee or a variable fee calculated according to the value of the trade goods they were carrying.

Yves Person notes that the large fortunes of the super merchants rarely resulted from commerce alone. While their personal qualities were paramount in their success, they generally came from lines of descent long established locally, with generations of big men in their past, who had formed multiple alliances with village communities. They performed various roles, for example, periodically becoming political leaders in times of turbulence, or combining their commercial activities with Muslim religious office (*imam*). The most profitable lines of commerce, such as dealing in slaves or imported firearms, were their exclusive domain because of the risks involved and major practical difficulties in organization (Person 1968: 114–122). The richest merchants headed large households that included numerous slaves, and possessed military might and mobile wealth. These resources allowed them to engage at the same time in production for sale, which was unusual in the nineteenth-century West African savannah. They started large farms in the open countryside worked by slaves settled in hamlets next to them to produce the staple food grains with which they fed their household dependents, the porters of their caravans, their trade agents, the numerous clients who visited them and their distinguished guests. Where there was a demand for food by transients, and where village communities did not offer any grain for sale or not enough of it, these rich merchants also sold some of the food they produced for money. In certain trade towns, some rich people, both men and women, employed slaves to

process tobacco for sale or to spin and weave cotton bands, which they then sold in regional markets (Caillé 1989, 2: 71; Person 1968: 120).

Historical figures who are presented in contemporary textbooks as military leaders are celebrated in oral traditions as people who started by being merchants. This was the case with Seku Watara, the eighteenth-century eponymous ancestor of the Watara political organization, credited with the conquest of a vast zone in the Upper Bandama and Mouhoun area (today in northern Côte d'Ivoire and western Burkina Faso).

Seku had a great gift for business. In five years (1700-1705) he accumulated a great fortune, the reputation of which spread far and wide beyond Kong.… Seku's commerce concerned salt bars, kola nuts, gold, the slaves that his army caught, and beautiful fabrics, many of which were woven by him and his numerous slaves. According to oral sources, before he took power [which is supposed to have happened in 1710] five hundred slaves worked on weaving textiles for him in Tenegra, and five hundred other slaves made trade trips for him between Worodougou, Mango, Gyaman, the Lobi country, Dagomba, Gonja, and Jenne and Timbuktu on the Niger River. (Kodjo 1986: 357–358)

At this stage of his career Seku also hired out his armed men for payment in gold. A critical instance was his agreement to join Abbas, the ruler of Gonja, in the assault to sack the prosperous town of Bouna. Seku used the gold that Abbas paid him for this service to buy muskets in Salaga and more slaves, with which he launched his new career as a war leader (discussed in Şaul 1998: 545).[4]

Rich merchants performed another role as hosts for travelling traders. The Manding term for this role is *jatigi*, but one of the best descriptions of it from modern life was made by Polly Hill in her study of Hausa butchers in Kumasi, Ghana (Hill 1966; Person 1968: 105–106; Boutilier 1971: 244; Meillassoux 1971: 189–190). The host provided board and lodging in his compound for the visitor, stored his goods and acted as his broker. He could also guarantee credit as collateral and serve as a sales agent for unsold goods or as a debt collector in between the visits of the travelling trader.

The *jatigi*'s role as a broker extended beyond the local market, as, on behalf of his guest, he could send his own agents with samples or letters to other merchants with whom he was associated in the region. If the traveller was pressed for time, the *jatigi* could also offer merchandise for purchase from his own stocks, or buy the unsold goods to provide the visiting trader with liquidity. With his network of agents and distant acquaintances, as a *jatigi* a rich merchant could anticipate a glut that would depress the price of a piece of merchandise or a shortage that would drive its price up. He thus had an advantage, which he could withhold from his trading guests, in making an assessment of the trading opportunities that were present.

These trade movements distributed the products of different areas over large distances across ecological zones. The important goods of West African commerce were kola nuts, which were produced only in the south, at the edge of the forest belt, but mostly consumed in the remote north; Sahara salt bars, which were mined at the opposite end of West Africa, in the desert; gold, which was produced in a few dispersed narrow localities at great distances from each other; and the iron smelted in abundance in several areas of the middle savannah and traded to other places that lacked the know-how. Timbuktu and other towns at the edge of the desert near the banks of the Niger River had a chronic shortage of food grains and needed supplies from the more humid agricultural zones in the near south. The quantities that reached destination areas, however, were uneven and sometimes out of phase with demand. This variability led to oscillations in prices. Heinrich Barth, who was astute, scholarly and the best informed of the nineteenth-century European explorers of West Africa, observed in Timbuktu that the price of imported grain changed according to the quantities that reached the city. He noted that Caillé had complained of the very high prices in the city, whereas during his own visit in 1853, thanks to abundant supplies from the Sansanding region in the Upper Niger, provisions were very cheap (Barth 1857–58, 2: 355). In contrast, in the same months, Sahara salt was becoming very expensive in Timbuktu because a fly infestation in the river had made caravan travel very difficult and had interrupted the supply of salt bars (*ibid*.: 358–359).

Monies

In the savannah region, two transactional currencies were dominant: cowrie shells and gold. The cowrie shell was a low denomination currency, while gold served for transactions involving higher values. At the beginning of their authoritative book on the cowrie shell, Jan Hagendorn and Marion Johnson state that it was a 'general purpose money,' which served as medium of exchange, a unit of account, a store of value and a standard for deferred payment (1986: 1). In the western portion of the forest belt, in southern West Africa, cowrie shells were not in use and gold was rare; commerce relied instead on light, hoe-shaped irons that were imported from the savannah in the north. In the savannah too there were islands of closed village communities that did not accept cowrie shells for trade, although sometimes they acquired them as a personal adornment and to embellish their craft items. Elsewhere, all the way to Timbuktu, cowries and gold created some kind of monetary 'system.' This system took shape in the first half of the eighteenth century, when the northern savannah cowrie zone, which had come into existence earlier and been replenished for centuries only by the trans-Saharan caravan trade, expanded to meet a corresponding movement of expansion in the southern cowrie zone, which had started in the sixteenth century and received large volumes of shells through the Atlantic trade, at first from Portuguese sailors, and later from the Dutch and the English (Johnson 1970).

The exchange rate between cowries and gold varied with time and place, as did the prices of other commodities, but it was permanent enough to provide some stability in making calculations of risk and profit. Gold was used in exchanges as gold dust, often carried in the hollow shaft of quills and measured by weight. Gold was not minted in West Africa, nor were the less expensive metals, which may be partly linked to the absence of political centres or models of political authority in the Mediterranean and Near Eastern pattern. In the nineteenth century some Maria Theresa dollars and Mexican dollars circulated as coins, but they were rarely encountered in the interior.

Other transactional media appeared in limited areas. The Sahara salt bars, which were around 1 × 0.40 × 0.05 m in size and weighed 25–28 kg,

were divided into 12 small bars of about 2 kg each, commonly being used in exchanges in this form. In the northern savannah they could be exchanged for 400 or 500 kola nuts (Person 1968: 123, n. 14; Binger 1892, I: 141). In the Hausa region, alongside cowries and gold, cotton bands were used for exchanges.

Everywhere, the most valuable goods were exchanged in barter-like swaps, without involving the large amounts of money that would otherwise be necessary. Often slaves were exchanged directly for horses or firearms. Even so, as units of value cowries and gold provided a framework of convertibility and value comparison throughout the savannah. A crucial point to cap this section: no single political authority existed in this region-wide horizon of exchange that was the West African savannah. Even circumscribed areas within it, notoriously the West Volta region on which I am focusing here, were *polycephalous*, that is, had dispersed, intermittent jurisdictions as islands of public authority, overlapping with non-territorial, network-like patterns of personal political power, and resulting in multi-layered heterogeneity. I offer this formulation in place of the more familiar but inadequate term 'acephalous,' which was elaborated by political anthropology in the mid-twentieth century and is discussed further in the section following the next one.

Polanyi, cowries and the market economy

Polanyi wrote about cowrie shells as money in his posthumously published study of Dahomey, a West African kingdom on the coast of the Bight of Benin that flourished at the height of the slave trade in the eighteenth century. According to Humphreys, Polanyi was concerned not so much 'with the working of the primitive market as such,' but with demonstrating that what superficially appeared as a market was in reality state-regulated distribution. Reports suggesting that such economies had markets with price movements were bound to be a problem for him (Humphreys 1969: 184). Polanyi recognized at some point that there was unambiguous historical evidence showing that cowrie shell values went up and down with price movements: they were 'exceptionally hard to stabilize,' he wrote, and 'their fluidity – lack of viscosity – made the maintenance of a formal exchange

rate in terms of precious metals as good as impossible' (Polanyi 1966: 187). Even so, he asserted emphatically that in Dahomey cowries were a creation of the state and that they 'gained the status of currency by virtue of state policy, which regulated its use and guarded its proliferation by preventing shiploads from being freely imported' (*ibid*.: 189). For Polanyi, cowries in Dahomey were definitely 'an archaic economic institution,' as Dahomey itself was an 'archaic kingdom,' which meant that in the evolutionary ladder of complexity it was situated somewhere between a 'primitive' and a 'market society.' In fact, he thought that it was a thoroughly centralized system where economic organization emerged from political decisions and trade was conducted by administrators at prices set by authority. According to Polanyi, these conditions did not fully apply to the Niger bend area inland, which he refrained from designating as 'archaic,' but without further specifying what else it might be.

Peukert (1978), a historian specializing in Dahomey who had set out to prove Polanyi 'right,' ended up criticizing this impressionistic analysis. The 'king' of Dahomey did not have the ability to restrict the number of persons who could have trade relations with European merchant ships, nor the means to control the volume of cowries that these ships unloaded. Furthermore, the royal traders were not bureaucrats who held a state function that would come into conflict with private profit, as we understand these terms today. Oppenheim (1964), a scholar of Near Eastern antiquity, who was likewise sympathetic overall to Polanyi's positions, expressed similar reservations about Polanyi's views on Babylon and Assyria. Polanyi, Oppenheim concluded, had exaggerated 'redistribution' by the palace in those places and had overlooked the activities of merchants, who, according to records preserved in clay tablets, were animated by considerations of private gain.

Humphreys observed in her review that, underlying Polanyi's accounts concerning 'archaic' kingdoms, there was an analogy with socialist accounting. The intellectual roots of this analogy between the archaeological and ethnographic cases and economic planning lie in Polanyi's work as an economic journalist and public intellectual in 1920s Vienna, when he took part in the debates against Ludwig von Mises and his

younger colleague Friedrich Hayek, both disciples of the economist Carl Menger (Rosner 1990; Polanyi-Levitt 2000: 4–5).[5] Yet the parallel between pre-modern economic organizations and contemporary proposals for alternatives to modern capitalist economic institutions cannot be maintained. In a sense, Polanyi himself made a 'modernist' error in supposing that in all societies and at all times the economy as a whole is integrated by how prices are decided, that is, are market-made as opposed to being set by political authority or custom (Humphreys 1969: 187).

We need to probe this matter a little further, because it has a bearing on nineteenth-century West African savannah markets and on production and trade in other pre-modern settings. The notion of 'integration,' as it came to be understood in economic anthropology under Polanyi's influence, may be misleading. Price-making markets integrate the self-regulating capitalist economy in the specific sense of optimization; therefore, those critics who wanted to propose a coordinated socialist economy as a replacement or improvement of the capitalist economy, as many thinkers did at the time of the Vienna debates, had to address the arguments of economists such as von Mises and suggest an alternative mechanism (such as planning) to achieve the same end of optimization. Pre-modern societies, however, were unlike both the existing capitalist and the proposed planned economies. Pre-modern societies were not 'economies' in the modern sense and were not and could not be 'integrated' in the same manner. The social and political processes uncovered and examined by Malinowski and Mauss as 'exchange' or by Richard Thurnwald (1932) as 'redistribution' were of a different nature and did not achieve optimal maximization. No useful purpose is served by assimilating these social flows to resource allocation under conditions of market pricing.

The political climate and its implications for commerce

In *The Great Transformation*, Polanyi had offered another view of the relationship between commerce and political life:

In the past the organization of trade had been military and warlike; it was an adjunct of the pirate, the rover, the armed caravan, the hunter and trapper,

the sword-bearing merchant, the armed burgess of the town, the adventurers and explorers, the planters and conquistadores, the man-hunters and slave-traders, the colonial armies of the chartered companies. (Polanyi 1944 [2001]: 15–16)

This rapid assessment, probably based on historical situations that Polanyi knew from his readings on Europe and Asia, also fits the West African savannah interior of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries better than the image of a bureaucratic Dahomey that he offered 20 years later. Especially in the western part of the savannah, with which I am concerned here, the political arena was made up of a large number of centres of power, heterogeneous in nature and composition, competing with each other, but opportunistically also collaborating or forming compacts as situations changed. Some of these nodes of power exerted their influence over large distances, but without achieving a monopoly of coercive means in the spaces in between. Among them were major military leaders, such as Tieba Traore, who, in his own lifetime in the nineteenth century, built the garrison town of Sikasso and surrounded it with a strong defensive wall. He faced rivals, other war leaders who were his near equals, but among the latter only Samori, who had arrived from the Guinea highlands in the west, survived him. Yet Tieba perished in the course of a conflict with less formidable opponents in January 1893, when he went on a campaign against forces allied to the Zara of Sia (Bobo-Dioulasso). For all his might, Tieba was surrounded by enemy villages that effectively blocked the roads against him in places lying less than forty kilometres away from Sikasso (places like Dioufourma or Samorogouan; Crozat 1891: 4798–4799). This is the kind of political situation I call ‘polycephaly.’

In the Mouhoun (Black Volta) region, major Samo and Bwa villages made considerable gifts (for example, one million cowrie shells) in quick succession to multiple distant military leaders, a state of affairs that the French traveller Crozat, who observed these payments in 1890, interpreted as absurd double or triple payments of tribute to overlapping sovereignties (Crozat 1891: 4808, 4820). Commercial towns such as Kong, Sia, Jenne and Timbuktu were administered by negotiation or intrigue among and

between rival blocks of established resident family branches and outside political forces. In the case of Timbuktu, one well-known example of the stalemate created by such rivalry from the mid-nineteenth century was the protection granted to the German traveller Barth by Ahmed al-Bakkai al-Kunti against Ahmadu, the *amir* of Hamdallahi (successor to Seku Amadu of Masina), who wanted to arrest the European intruder and assert his rule over the city (Monteil 1938). A comparable case from the West Volta region a few decades later was Binger's 1888 sojourn in Sia, where the Jula ward of the town harbored him, despite the hostility of its Zara establishment, after which Binger continued to travel safely through the area under the protection of networks of merchants and war leaders associated with Kong.

Military leaders, religious authorities, rich merchants and strong village confederations co-existed and successively became allies and rivals. They possessed autonomous power, although their might was limited by the relative strength of nearby and distant opponents.[6] The boundaries between warrior, merchant and religious leader were permeable and shifting, and these powerful actors invariably had critical connections with farming communities, which could switch from alliance to hostility. As he travelled through the southern portion of the region enclosed by the bend of the Mouhoun River, Binger wrote:

'This zone is not under the authority of a sovereign, but is divided into confederations, which extend over areas of varying size and carry the name of their principal village – as are Beledugu and some other places in the Mande [today central Mali, the western bank of the Niger River]' (Binger 1892: 407).

The situation described by Binger appears chaotic from the perspective of closely regulated state systems, like those established in Europe from the seventeenth century; but it was not an impediment to trade. Wankara, a Bwa village Binger bypassed, had a flourishing trade in horses and salt bars from the north and kola nuts from the south (Binger 1892: 409). Commercial life was sufficiently developed that there was even a village of blacksmiths nearby who prospered by engaging in the massive manufacture of hoes,

which they sold to provision Bobo-Dioulasso. It was enough for them to make a livelihood, and they had no need to farm, a singular arrangement for the time (*ibid*.: 407).

Warring activity was generally low-scale and endemic. It was strongly connected with long-distance trade, as it created a demand for the products of that trade and supplied some of its most valuable commodities. A town became an important trading centre when it was associated with war professionals. Conversely, towns that had rich merchants or authoritative Islamic leaders frequently acquired the characteristics and fame of a military stronghold. Military strong men protected trading expeditions and the long-distance market towns that emerged in their areas of influence. As they wanted the goods the traders brought them in exchange for the captives they could supply, and as they themselves were often involved in commerce in some capacity, they viewed the fees that independent villages imposed on the trading companies that travelled through their territory as extortion, and they tried to limit the occurrence or abuse of such practices.

In 1887, Adama Sidibe of Barani, more commonly known as Widi, an important military adventurer of the zone lying north of the Mouhoun River bend, created a new regional market in the south, in the area circumscribed by the river, by transferring the market that used to exist in his own town. The new location of the market was adjacent to the village of Warkoy, which was more centrally located in terms of merchant traffic, and, on account of being on high ground, was accessible in the wet as well as dry seasons. Before that date Warkoy had been a large, independent village of Bwa agriculturists without a market. The village remained independent after the creation of the market, but with Widi's involvement and the impulse of commerce, the area surrounding the market place developed into 'a large cosmopolitan city like Bobo-Dioulasso' (Crozat 1891: 1806) attracting traders from afar. The Hausa merchants who frequented it became so numerous as almost to form their own village on one side of it. Salt bars, woollen blankets from Masina, horses from the Sahelian breeding zones, cotton blankets and embroidered gowns from the Hausa country were in plentiful supply, kola nuts and gold dust less so (*ibid*.: 1807). In his description, Crozat passes over the most important commercial article of the

town. Warkoy had acquired a sinister reputation as the largest slave market in the region, and to trade in captives was the main reason why Widi had started it, why gold was less prominent in it as currency and presumably also why Hausa merchants were so numerous in attending it. The Hausa country served as gateway, through Murzuk, to the trans-Sahara destinations of Tripoli and the other ports of the Gulf of Sirte on the Mediterranean, which at that date were still active and open to international trade.[7]

Crozat, writing still under the shock of the experience, has left us a chilling anecdote that provides a close view of slave production. A Jula trader, travelling with his immediate family and a small group of dependents, was part of Crozat's convoy. After Warkoy he decided to separate from the convoy, and the small group under his guidance ventured to forge ahead on their own to the east. Unfortunately, this was an area troubled by armed encounters between the men of different Fulbe leaders, armed merchants and strong Bwa village leagues. Two days later the small group was attacked on the road. Its men were killed on the spot, and its women and children were brought back to the town, as captives this time, bound hand and foot. They were sold in the market, before the convoy participants who had been their fellow road travellers of only a few days earlier (Crozat 1891: 4808). 'Lucky him who is the mightiest!' wrote Crozat. 'He can catch people, sell their possessions, sell their person too, in broad daylight, in the market, and no one finds anything objectionable' (*ibid*.: 4801). Or, we could add, would be able to do much about it if they did. The example provided in this instance is not a case of a 'centralized state' praying upon a 'segmentary society' – two distinct social types located at a distance from each other, with ethnicity and culture serving as defining features. This distorting dichotomy persists, making it hard to understand the historical circumstances of trade and political life in the region between the Volta basin and the Niger, the energy that animated these societies, the multiplicity of actors, the struggles and ambitions, the layering of interlinked domains.

Captives were brought to Warkoy by many military adventurers whose livelihoods depended on their ability to catch such prey, or by local traders

who collected them in small numbers from the areas through which they passed. Captives were also produced in village conflicts, skirmishes between small armed groups, opportunistic individuals grabbing others in the countryside, secret village youth gangs and low-level banditry by small-scale entrepreneurs. In a dendritic structure, this human commodity was gathered from the countryside, bulked into progressively larger convoys, passed into the hands of merchants of greater means and dispatched toward distant sale areas in either the Sudanic or Sahelian zones. Some slaves ended up in the trans-Saharan export ports of the Mediterranean. Slaving, like other commercial enterprises, was a feature of the polycephalous political environment. Multiple confrontations between a variety of strong men and organized village communities fed the supply, while multiple actors were also involved on the demand side. Slave prices fluctuated widely. The variation in prices that the travel literature and oral recollections recorded in the twentieth century concerning different places and slightly different times is endless.

The military stratum was divided, not uniform even in terms of social organization, but as an aggregate it contained most of the buyers of high-value commodities on which long-distance trade depended. The leaders of fighting companies were not themselves necessarily arms-bearing men. Among them were elders, men of advanced age, and also a few rich women. These people bought the horses, the fine swords and muskets, the salt bars, the embroidered cotton textiles and woollen blankets and the occasional exotic import that had made its way from Europe or the Middle East.[8] In the Mouhoun and Comoe River areas, in contrast, farmers living in village communities did not wear cotton cloth – not out of poverty, but generally holding a kind of taboo against it[9] – and did not consume kola nuts, while many of them considered rock salt a luxury beyond their reach.

Even so, the agriculturists were not insulated from money and trade, but collected and hoarded cowrie shells, and in many places they strove to purchase firearms and gunpowder, which for them were more useful for hunting large game than for war. The relationships of agriculturists to trade were constrained by community structures. The cowries and other exotic goods were incorporated into village households in ways that kept these

goods away from junior men. Let us take as an illustration the Bobo-speaking agriculturists of the villages located in a band that stretches east and west from Bobo-Dioulasso (my own fieldwork site for many years). People in these villages were keen to acquire cowries and cotton textiles, which they did not wear as daily clothing but exhibited on ceremonial occasions, primarily at the commemorative funerals held before the start of the farming season. Wealth in these forms was accumulated by senior men and women in their capacity as the elders of matrilineal groups (Şaul 1992). The same senior men also kept flocks of goats and sheep, firearms and slaves as custodians for the group.[10] At their deaths, these resources were transmitted to their matrilineal successors or heirs, who were not members of his farming unit and often moved out of the village as well, because they lived in another village. As for marriages, they were conducted in this area without involving exchanges of durables. Unions were arranged among coteries of senior men and women, following matrilineal networks. A feature of Bobo community life was the fines imposed by the village authorities on junior men on sundry pretexts. Young men needed money to pay them, they needed an animal to make a personal sacrifice at a shrine or to obtain medicines, or they desired a personal adornment to wear at a dance. On all these occasions they went to ask a senior person, often an elder sister or their mother, or for more important requests to an older matron of the matrilineage or the male head of their matrilineal segment. Some of the resources of the farm group were converted into the matrilineal funds and treasures held by senior men, but the entire money and trade goods sector was kept locked in secrecy, to come into the open only intermittently in bitter inheritance disputes, but otherwise maintaining a convention of daily life according to which money was of little use in the village.

A telling example of pre-colonial agriculturists' limited involvement in monetary transactions comes from the ethnography of the Dogon. During her 1935 fieldwork, Denise Paulme learned from reading an earlier ethnography of the same area that farmers gave each other food grain as loans, but on condition of a return in kind with a stiff increment: double the volume at the next harvest, or if this failed to materialize, four times the

volume two harvests beyond that. In contrast, when they made loans of money to each other they charged no interest. She was intrigued by this practice and made inquiries to find out if this was true. Her interlocutors confirmed the information and explained their reasoning to her: 'Millet, they said, when planted in the soil, produces a harvest a few months later. But cowrie shells or coins, if they are buried in the soil will never produce new pieces' (Paulme 1988 [1940]: 115). This was an inversion of market logic. For these villagers, money did not engender money, unlike millet, for which they did entertain some version of commodity fetishism. Their exchanges in the market were made not for profit, but strictly to acquire a particular object, money for them being merely a mediator for the exchange of useful articles – a staging of Marx's textbook example of simple commodity production: C→ M → C' [where C = commodity; M = money].

Political authority and money

The conclusion of the foregoing exposition is that in nineteenth-century West Africa commerce and monies were not circumscribed by the limits of one type of political authority, irrespective of whether we conceive this type as a centralized polity or as a communitarian and polycephalic aggregate of social groups and individuals. Commerce and monies crossed multiple boundaries, spilled over several types and established links between them. The progress of Caillé's small trade convoy, which needed to collect from its members the money to pay the tolls each time it entered a new village jurisdiction, provides a vivid illustration. One question that has to be addressed now is how under these circumstances the currencies remained stable enough to do their job and make private gain possible for the traders and merchants who populated the markets and the routes that linked them to each other.

One of the issues that remain unclear in *The Great Transformation* is why gold bullion, which was reviled by Polanyi as supporting the self-regulating market and harming society, was promoted by other enthusiasts as a sure way of limiting government intervention in the economy. In our own day, the gold standard is still defended by libertarian free-market advocates to the same end, and they fill Internet pages with predictions of

doom for our current monetary system, which is not gold-based. What is the difference between gold bullion and the fiat money issued by states or by international banking institutions without a gold backing? Polanyi was reluctant to use the term 'commodity money,' but without it his reasoning remained unclear. The difference is, in fact, that gold is a commodity money and that its value as a commodity derives from conditions of supply and demand that flow beyond the borders of any single state. Gold's scarcity value is ultimately upheld by the cost of its production, and governments cannot increase its supply at will or change its value.

For this reason, gold served as a trading currency in pre-modern West Africa, as elsewhere in the world, within and between political jurisdictions, and it also brought distant geographical locations into economic contact. The same was true of cowrie shells. They were not manufactured, but the cost factor determined their scarcity and valuation in transportation, which was especially onerous because of the low unit value of the shells and the difficult travel conditions when they were carried over large distances. Polanyi noted quickly that cowrie values did not vary by much at the coast and the far interior in historical West Africa. However, Johnson (1970), with ampler documentation, established that the very large quantities of cowrie shells brought to the Atlantic coast since the sixteenth century by European merchant ships did produce inflationary pressures once the locals accepted them as a medium of exchange. Nonetheless the rate of devaluation remained moderate for a long time, and West Africa was able to absorb an enormous volume of cowrie imports because of the inland trade for the cowries. Vast areas of the savannah interior became an expansion zone for cowrie monetization, relieving the pressure of increased quantities in the coastal region and slowing down devaluation until the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was only then that a great cowrie inflation debased the currency in West Africa.

If we continue the story into the twentieth century, once the colonial administrations had been established they banned further cowrie imports. In some parts of the Volta region the population's preference for cowries over the colonial currency created a development in the opposite direction, upholding cowrie values in those places until the 1950s. In the end, the

cowries stopped being used as money because they became too scarce to be useful for exchange, thereafter only being used for purposes of ritual and ornamentation (Şaul 2004).

The way people form preferences for a money medium or for certain goods – freely as we assume was the case in pre-modern conditions – is not well understood. Nonetheless once this preference was expressed, supply and demand, profitability and private calculations all played a part, which was larger or smaller depending on other circumstances. West Africa had a complicated commercial life intermingled with its political history. The prevalence of the ideas of administered trade, fixed exchange ratios, customary behaviour and even the notion of 'spheres of exchange' promoted by Paul Bohannan, which was inspired by tentative analyses of very different Pacific island societies, did not encourage exploration of this topic.[11] That said, though, larger questions loom. What about the broader socioeconomic system within which trade takes place? How was commerce linked to production activities, and how are we to conceptualize the nature of this socioeconomic formation?

In West Africa, long-distance trade carried the products of one ecological zone to the others. As these zones are bands that stretch from east to west, long-distance trade had a general north–south orientation. The trade between Jenne and Timbuktu is well documented in historical accounts, and the goods mentioned in them can be surmised to have been traded more widely: rice and millet packed in sacks, honey in earthen jars, large blocks of shea butter packaged in leaves and reinforced with stiff rush ligaments, local peppers, tamarind, onions, indigo loaves, loads of kola nuts, locust bean flour, baobab fruit powder, forged iron bars, ivory, gold dust, civet musk, dried skins, cotton textiles, wood blankets and slaves (Mauny 1961: 367). The main trade items sent from the Sahelian to the Sudanic zone in the south were cattle, horses, donkeys, Sahara salt bars and dried fish, which was produced in great abundance on the banks of the Middle Niger (*ibid.*: 357). From the southern humid savannah–forest border zone to the north, the main trade item was kola nuts. The main framework of this trade pattern must have been in place since very old times, since the

word *wangara*, which is used to designate Manding-speaking traders, had already been recorded by Ibn Battuta in the fourteenth century (*ibid.*: 388).

The long- or middle-distance trade was distinct from the local exchanges that took place in the villages. Most village settlements in the Sudanic zone did not have markets attended by long-distance traders, but they had a place where local women or a few visiting craftsmen or trader women exchanged goods in the afternoons. In these places farm householders could obtain things that they needed immediately but lacked. Most participants were women, who often came to find secondary ingredients for their cooking, and the quantities exchanged were minute. When cooked food was also included in the range of goods offered for sale, we cannot even be sure whether this should truly be considered trade or rather a service that the women provided to strangers. In the Mouhoun region, historically, if grain was to be sold to fellow villagers, usually it was offered after being brewed into beer, again a borderline case between trade and the provision of service. The brewers did not purchase their inputs and had no way of calculating profit or loss. Long-distance trade, however, had the effect of developing local exchange. Even when local market places remained separate from long-distance markets both spatially and in terms of periodicity, the number of participants and the range of goods offered for sale in local markets increased under the impact of the caravan trade. Cooking, brewing and the preparation of road foods, such as *gari* made from millet or manioc, lost their service-like character and turned into minor industries. Food grains became an occasional trade item when harvests were plentiful. Modest farm householders were tempted to acquire exotic trade items.

Long-distance trade also established connections with the trans-Saharan trade, which is how cowrie shells and glass beads first reached the Sudanic zone, and later with the Atlantic seaborne trade, whence copper, gunpowder, ammunition and firearms entered the interior. Imports to West Africa through the Mediterranean ports on the Gulf of Sirte and the trans-Sahara connection – of inexpensive industrial textiles, needles and all sorts of other manufactured goods from Europe – as well as exports through the same conduit from sub-Saharan Africa to other continents flourished all the way

to the end of the nineteenth century, and the European explorers of that century encountered evidence for them in the markets of the interior. These trans-Saharan relations even gained momentum in the 1880s before declining right before the onset of the colonial period (Johnson 1976).

A non-capitalist social formation with price-forming markets

What was well-founded in Polanyi's assertions concerning pre-capitalist societies was his insistence that trade in them was subsidiary to the main subsistence economy and the reallocation of necessities. This was as true in West Africa, despite its well-developed commercial life, as it was elsewhere. The insight is important, not trivial, when we begin research on African economic history because an exclusive focus on commercial life or on particular trade institutions, without linking these to the production of food and other basic necessities, is common in the specialist literature and results in a major distortion. The main difference between modern economies, whether capitalist or socialist, and some of the earlier societies is that in the latter exchange prices had little connection with production decisions. Whether these prices were fixed by authority or custom, or instead bargained and, following supply and demand, fluctuated, ultimately made no difference (Humphreys 1969: 187). Markets were *peripheral* in this particular sense, no matter how significant they remained in other ways. Prices did not affect production decisions because of the agricultural context: the bulk of the harvest was consumed by the producer, a household or a larger sharing social unit, and land and labour were not transacted. Transport difficulties restricted the trader's opportunities to benefit by deriving a profit from price fluctuations in the basic necessities. Certainly in West Africa, whenever a rainfall deficit resulted in catastrophic harvests and food shortages, food grains did become prohibitively expensive in that particular locality, but until recently the response was for many people to desert the area of famine and take refuge in more fortunate zones, or in desperate situations to resort to drastic measures to reduce the number of consumers, like selling dependent members. The higher prices did not attract grain to the disaster area, and in subsequent years in neighbouring areas conditions for farm production remained unchanged. The way the

prices were formed had no effect on the processes of production; most importantly, they did not modify the self-provisioning orientation of the economy.

The contributors to *Markets in Africa* addressed these issues with greater clarity than Polanyi's own writings, which inspired them. The 'market principle' means not only price formation by impersonal forces, but also that these prices serve to allocate resources, incomes and outputs in the economy. In pre-colonial Africa land and labour were not transacted. The basic necessities of life were produced by self-provisioning and non-market transfers, such as kinship obligations and contributions to in-laws, older relatives, office-holders and those in authority. From the point of view of the entire economy, sales or purchases were not the dominant form of making a livelihood (Bohannan and Dalton 1962: 2, 7). Bohannan and Dalton also recognized that in these circumstances the forces of supply and demand could still be operative within the confines of commercial life. In the limited domain where commercial relations prevail, seasonal variations in price and price changes that depend on other supply conditions do occur, and for trade professionals the markets may be of central concern, not peripheral at all. The prices made in the market place, however, do not allocate factor resources among alternative outputs. Bohannan and Dalton illuminated this situation with an analogy: prices in peripheral market places, they wrote, are like prices in our antique auctions; supply and demand determine how high they will be, but they do not affect the future production of the things thus priced (*ibid*.: 8).

Nevertheless, Bohannan and Dalton gave the influence of Polanyi's narrow focus on pricing away when they wrote about markets in Africa as if they were a recent creation and transitional. They presented a market typology consisting of three parts; in fact, there is simply a contrast between non-market and market societies, the medium term being a stage of transition from one to the other inserted in between. Elsewhere, Dalton had written about the effect of the European economy in developing cash-cropping in colonial Africa and in stimulating the formation of wage labour. It seems that the Introduction's 'peripheral markets' was conceived as a catch-all label for all the mixed cases and hybrid situations that resulted

from this recent influence. Thus recasting Polanyi's 'embedded economy' in the contrastive mould of cultural difference flattened its historical depth and turned it into the proverbial 'we' versus 'they,' with a regrettable 'impact' phase posited for the latter, thus causing their loss of original purity. The tendency in anthropology to view non-European peoples through the lens of 'first contact' had a part to play in this process. The political context of the day made it easy to overlook the fact that there was no 'first contact' when it came to Europe and Africa. Trade relations and cultural influences between the two continents stretch back the dawn of history. Commerce in West Africa was not new; it antedated the modern period. Europe itself had not remained unchanged, but had gone through different historical epochs in the course of this history. In order to grasp the economy of historical West Africa as a whole and theorize it at some level of conceptual abstraction, the notions of 'first contact' and 'the influence of the market economy' need to be left behind. The diversity of historical socioeconomic formations displays more complexity than the dichotomy between market and non-market, and it requires greater subtlety for understanding than we and they.

Polanyi characterized capitalism as an 'unregulated market system,' and because of this narrow definition he did not address the factors that were responsible for its dynamic properties (Bell 2002: 119). A related blind spot is the fact that he characterized the societies of Near Eastern antiquity and Africa as simply antithetical to the market. Capitalism is more than a system of traders and merchants seeking profits. The distinctive feature of the capitalist socioeconomic formation is not market price formation, but the concentration of its productive resources in the hands of the few and the resulting necessity for the rest to work for wages to make a living, a dynamo that drives accumulation and innovation as well as resistance, leapfrogging the system from one form to another. Paradoxically, Polanyi's desire early in his intellectual trajectory to counter the pro-market, no-state-intervention analyses and policy recommendations of the neoclassical economists of Vienna with arguments in favour of general social solidarity and planning blunted his view of capitalism, as well as his curiosity in

developing an understanding of so-called archaic societies for their own sake.

Another figure, Maxime Rodinson, a scholar of the medieval Islamic world, turned to the study of commerce and banking in a particularly fertile climate of opinion and research (1973). Questions of economic development in the countries that had emerged from decolonization in Asia and Africa had rekindled an interest in Max Weber's explanation of the origins of capitalism: that ascetic Protestantism, by spurring personal acquisitiveness and enrichment, unlike other religions, had become a fortuitous contributor to its development in Western Europe. Rodinson contributed to this discussion, while also offering an oblique comment on the 1960s Marxist debates on modes of production. The medieval Islamic world possessed trading companies, supply and demand ruled markets, there was a class of merchants who avidly pursued profit, money was lent at high interest rates and in various places there was large-scale production of commodities (*ibid*.: 29-33). In other words, it had an 'un-embedded economy,' the coinage being Rodinson's own. There even existed a ruling in Islamic religion, based on a tradition attributed to the Prophet, condemning the laying down of prices by authority. All this went on while at the same time official doctrine revealed an anti-mercantile spirit inspired by Aristotle and maybe also the Old Testament. This description of the Islamic world has an affinity with West Africa, although it is not identical with it, and indeed West Africa had, as already mentioned, historical connections with the Islamic Mediterranean.

Rodinson noted that this situation was not peculiar to the Islamic world. The ancient Near East, Greece, the Roman Empire, India, China, Japan and medieval Europe also possessed, from production to distribution, a complete money- and profit-oriented circuit (1973: 56). But if we turn now to the reproduction of the society as a whole, neither the Islamic world nor these other civilizations relied on this money circuit for it. The greatest proportion of the society consisted of farmers who produced for their own subsistence, and this activity had no connection to the market. The state, as an organism superimposed on dispersed local communities, linked them together and extracted produce from them, but for the most part it did not

affect their internal characteristics. The landowners and the state were outsiders to the market as well. This situation was totally unlike capitalism, which started developing in western Europe in the sixteenth century, by which point a substantial amount of wealth had accumulated in the hands of some people in urban areas. The wealth was directed to the manufacture of goods, that is, industrial production for the market. Fertile ground was prepared for this kind of production by the presence of a large group of unattached workers, who for various reasons had been previously 'freed' from feudal obligations and community belonging. They could take and indeed depended on wage work, and this was unique to the Western European experience. Before modern times it did not occur in the Islamic world, nor anywhere else. For all that, in all these other historical situations there was a coherent sector of the economy where one type of activity prevailed, which was carried on by a particular type of people who acted under the impulse of a singular motive: to make their money fruitful. And that money is, of course, what we call capital.

Rodinson proposed to call the circumscribed monetary sector found in these historical societies 'capitalistic,' a term meant to contrast with 'capitalist,' as in our own. Yves Person adopted Rodinson's term 'capitalistic' in his monumental account of the rise of a late nineteenth-century political movement led by Samori Ture, which had its roots in the Jula trade environment of the southeast Guinea highlands (Person 1968). In Rodinson's conception, a social formation consisted of several sets of relations of production, juxtaposed and articulated with each other, the trade circuit being only one of them. What is very useful to retain from this view concerning West African culture history is the widespread presence of unregulated money and the drive for profits, as illustrated in the descriptive sections of this chapter, of merchants and travelling traders, and, yes, of fluctuating market prices for the goods they sold. None of this implies that the other productive activities or the social reproduction of the society as a whole involved self-regulating pricing processes. The money and commerce nexus existed in the interstices of a society consisting mostly of self-provisioning farming communities. This larger economy was not integrated by market-made prices, nor by other, alternative social

mechanisms. It was, on the contrary, disjointed. Reciprocity and redistribution had a very little part to play outside narrow kinship networks and local areas, and these social flows cannot achieve resource allocation. It was nonetheless a thriving society, its progression interrupted and rechannelled only in the last two decades of the nineteenth century by a military occupation that became the beginning of what we call colonialism.

Notes

1. Tieme is now a municipal town of the Odienne department in northwestern Côte d'Ivoire, near the Guinean border. The quotes from Caillé, Binger and other French language sources are translated into English by the author.
2. Tengrela is now a town in the far north of Côte d'Ivoire, on the border with Mali.
3. A great deal of information on the historical kola nut trade, which spanned different ecological zones in West Africa, and further references are provided in Lovejoy (1980).
4. The towns mentioned in this paragraph lie to the east and west of, but not far from, the current day Ghana–Côte d'Ivoire border.
5. Carl Menger is considered to be one of the three founders of marginalism in economic analysis, together with his contemporaries, the English economist William Jevons and the Swiss mathematical economist Léon Walras, from Lausanne. Working independently of each other, they brought about the 'neoclassical revolution' that introduced the style of economic research that prevailed in most economics departments in the twentieth century.
6. Two publications examine these political circumstances in the West Volta region: Şaul (1998) for the eighteenth-century origins and nineteenth-century development of the Watara of Kong; and Şaul (2013) for the Zara houses of Sia, which carry the patronymic Sanu, during the nineteenth century.
7. See Newbury (1966) and Johnson (1976) for the port terminuses between Tripoli and Cyrenaica of trans-Saharan caravan routes and the

trade conducted through them with the rest of the world, including discussion of the sub-Saharan component of it.

8. One of the women was Momo of Sikasso, Tieba Traore's older sister whom Quiquandon calls an 'Amazon fighter,' although by 1890, when he met her, she was afflicted with an advanced stage of leprosy; the other woman was Gimbi Watara of Bobo-Dioulasso, famous for being Binger's host when he visited the city, often referred to as a 'princess' in current textbooks, but primarily as 'brewer' in the local traditions. These two women had extensive personal trading operations, and among these as a profit-making venture they owned companies of purchased slave men, which they armed and made available to others as a platoon of fighters for hire to be employed in warring expeditions (Quiquandon 1891: 440–441; Traoré 1937: 72–73).
9. Goody and Goody (2012) explored the contrast, in the historical ethnography of the West African savannah, between those who wore cotton textiles and those who refused to do so.
10. In the nineteenth century, the slaves usually were sent as counterpart gifts to an allied village that provided young fighters to participate in the military expeditions of organized military groups. There were several such groups in the area. A non-exhaustive list includes the Zara houses in Sia and elsewhere; Watara nuclei domiciled in different locations; the Tiefo garrison in Numudara, a town lying south of Bobo-Dioulasso; and farther north, the rival Fulbe leaders of Donkui and Barani, and the Lobbo warlords (errant successors to Seku Amadu).
11. Bohannan did not provide a reference for the important notion of 'spheres of exchange' that he elaborated in the 1950s on the basis of Tiv ethnography from Nigeria in his first two short articles on the subject, which had the major impact. A genealogy for the expression is hinted at in Bohannan and Dalton (1962: 4), which gives the credit to Raymond Firth. Bohannan and Dalton made reference there to a later publication, but Firth first introduced the expression 'spheres of exchange' in his work on Polynesia (1939: 339–343), explaining that food, bonito hooks, canoes and marriages all involved trade-like exchanges, but that these domains remained separate and

incommensurable for lack of a common monetary measure or an interest on the part of the actors to link them; consequently, he explained, any abstract calculation a researcher might elaborate to present a general picture of the flows became pointless. Bohannan and Dalton added that Thurnwald (1932) 'recognized the situation but said little about it.' Firth himself had made reference to Thurnwald, but the idea is only implicit in that work. Bohannan and Dalton attributed the original inspiration to Malinowski's description of 'separate transactional spheres' in the Trobriands (Malinowski 1922). This intellectual pedigree was not widely recognized in Africanist anthropology. If it had been better known, the later distorted view of 'spheres of exchange' as an intrinsic African cultural imperative forbidding the exchange of some goods against other goods could have been avoided. The only clear-sighted discussion of this topic I have seen is the entry '*sfere di scambio*' in the Italian encyclopedia *Dizionario di anthropologia*, edited by Ugo Fabietti and Francesco Remotti (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1997: 674). It includes references, but only to the later rather than original publications of the authors discussed here.

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Chapter 9

Market thinking: Perspectives from Saharan and Atlantic West Africa

Ann B. Stahl

Introduction

Despite having engaged for several decades in a project focused on the global entanglements of West African village life in recent centuries, I had thought little about markets and market places[1] until prompted to do so by the workshop on which this volume is based. I have drawn on Banda Research Project (BRP) data from the western Volta River basin to address related topics, including valuation (Stahl 2002), specialized craft production (Stahl 2016a; Stahl *et al*. 2008), the circulations that linked societies within and outside the continent (Stahl 2008; 2014; 2015a; 2016b) and the transactional dynamics of surplus (Stahl 2015c). However, the question of markets and market places has remained implicit, as if part of peripheral rather than focal vision. The project of this volume encouraged me to address this void by exploring what others have been saying about markets and market places and to reflect on what we might discern about market and market-place processes in relation to the dynamic and complex entanglements of Volta basin peoples with Saharan and Atlantic exchange networks.

A quick finger on the pulse of literature confirms that I am not alone among Africanist archaeologists in ignoring questions centred on markets and market places. A rapid review of key journals (*African Archaeological Review*; *Azania*; *Journal of African Archaeology*) and edited volumes

(Mitchell 2005; Mitchell and Lane 2013; Ogundiran and Falola 2007; Reid and Lane 2004; Stahl 2005b) reveals only occasional mentions of them (though cf. Nixon 2017), despite growing attention to long-distance exchange and its role in forging continental and inter-continental connections.[2] This reflects in part the challenges of evidence, but other factors contribute to a quiet reluctance on the part of archaeologists working in Africa to engage with the topic of markets.

To contextualize this reluctance, I journey into literature on other world areas to gauge how archaeologists working in the western hemisphere have approached the topic; I sample the historical and ethnographic literature on West African market practices, reflecting on their foci and contributions to an understanding of market dynamics; and I offer thoughts on how we can infer the existence of market places from relatively low-resolution archaeological sources and enrich our understanding of them as sites of emergent and consequential social interaction.

Four broader points animate my discussion. First, I argue that the typological approach that dominated early studies of African markets diverted attention away from the complex interfaces among societies of varying scale that have long characterized West Africa. As blunt tools that carried forward traces of social evolutionary thinking, typological approaches provided little inspiration for investigating market processes. Secondly, although the archaeological study of market places is challenged by issues of equifinality (the inability to sort between alternative explanations in light of the limits of our data), we may nonetheless infer their presence from low-resolution data, while at the same time recognizing the problematic aspects of simply imagining market practice through the lenses of ethnography or recent history. Thirdly, I argue that investigating communities and constellations of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) through objects and their circulation promises to provide insights into market places as sites of ‘knowledge in motion’ (Roddick and Stahl 2016a), thereby encouraging us to examine cultural practice as emergent in relation to changing interfaces and ‘recurrent turbulence’ (Guyer 2007: 187). Finally, I draw on evidence from the Banda area to underscore the point that trajectories of markets and market places are complex and non-linear.

Engaging with markets

If the persistent historical conjuncture must take a key role in explanation, then social theory based on systems – 'the market' or the autonomous local society – becomes only of partial use in establishing the persistent elements and relationships by which people individually and collectively create economies. (Guyer 2004: 6–7)

West Africa is home to impressively large and iconic open-air market places, which no doubt expanded under monetized colonial regimes, even though market exchange has deep temporal roots in the region, preceding by centuries the commercial relations of expanding capitalism (Garrard 1980; 2004: 8). Treated as key signs of modernity and civilization, anthropologists, geographers and historians of the early independence period shared an interest in the form, character and history of West African markets, even if they did not always agree on the relevant questions to ask or the answers to be sought (Bohannan and Dalton 1962a; Good 1973; Hodder and Ukwu 1969; Hopkins 1973; Meillassoux 1971a). Early studies were nonetheless united by a concern to demonstrate the relevance of markets to African economic life and to counter the colonialist presumption that the latter was not based on rational principles. In short, scholars shared an interest in demonstrating the 'normalcy' of African economic behaviour (Herskovits 1962: viii), even if a focus on its more particular or universal forms divided substantivist from formalist perspectives.

West African societies provided fodder for the substantivist critique of Enlightenment-inspired utilitarian rationalism, as well as empirical grounding for studies of 'the human economy as a social process' (Polanyi *et al.* 1957: 240). Substantivists argued that price-making markets shaped by supply and demand were a recent western European innovation. Principles of economic rationality grounded in such markets therefore provided a faulty lens through which to understand 'the configuration of goods and person movements which actually make up the economy' (*ibid*.: 242), as well as diverting attention away from the embeddedness of the 'human economy' in 'non-economic' institutions and processes (Polanyi 1957: 250). The substantivist distinctions between reciprocity, redistribution and exchange as

economic modes was thus imagined in part through African examples and shaped the substantivist critique of utilitarian rationalism. These modes were imagined as morally charged Weberian ideal types to be investigated cross-culturally (Nakassis *et al.* 2011: 180; also Blanton and Fargher 2010: 207–208).

Looking back, the different classificatory strategies of anthropologists and historians probably influenced how Africanist archaeologists approached the study of 'pre-colonial' economies. Anthropologists Bohannan and Dalton (1962b: 2–3) proposed a three-fold categorization of societies that differentiated those with a 'multicentric' economy, supposedly lacking markets and market principles; those with market places, but for which market principles were peripheral; and those dominated by market principles, thought to be continuous with so-called 'modern' economies. Their three-fold classification carried forward an implicit social evolutionary scheme that has been eschewed within African archaeology (McIntosh 1999). Historians like Anthony Hopkins (1973) criticized Bohannan and Dalton's classification of 'traditional' African societies for its lack of evidence from pre-colonial contexts. He proposed instead a classification centred on distinctions between local and long-distance trade, though with less focus on market places. While Hopkins' perspective influenced African archaeology, substantivist 'market thinking' rooted in African studies took on new forms through wider circulations as interest in regional systems proliferated elsewhere but waned in West Africa from the early 1970s (Piot 1992: 34).

In a consequential move for anthropological archaeology, mid-twentieth-century anthropologists (Fried 1967; Sahlins 1972; Service 1975) posited a relationship between reciprocity, redistribution and markets as economic modes with social evolutionary 'levels' (egalitarian, chiefdom and state societies). Polanyi's claim that market economies by definition involved the commoditization of land and labour resulted in an overall inattention to market-place exchange in so-called 'pre-modern' settings, even in places like the Basin of Mexico, where early chroniclers described marketplaces in some detail. This contributed to a market/no market dichotomy that has structured archaeological studies until recently (Feinman and Garraty 2010:

168–169). Those studying early states focused attention on redistribution models in which elites were understood as nodes for the collection and subsequent distribution of goods. However, Earle's (1977) call for a reappraisal based on Hawaiian chiefdoms signalled a point after which redistribution came to be seen as focused primarily on controlling the circulation of prestige goods. A concern to refine archaeological correlates of reciprocity, redistribution and market exchange followed (for a concise, if positioned history, see Earle 2011: 238–241; also Blanton and Fargher 2010: 208–210; Garraty 2010: 10–15).[3] Nonetheless, Polanyi's overarching influence and the primitivist-modernist dichotomy that underwrote substantivism gave form to an 'intellectual lacuna' around pre-industrial markets, fostering 'a basic decommercialization of ancient economies' (Feinman and Garraty 2010: 169; also Blanton and Fargher 2010).

Within West Africa, the impact of substantivist perspectives on the understanding of market activity was felt particularly through Bohannan's influential work on Tiv 'spheres of exchange' (Bohannan 1955). While his views were challenged by later scholars, Bohannan's perspective on the lack of convertibility between spheres in a multi-centric economy comprised of discrete 'levels' reinforced an unproductive market/no market approach that obscures the way in which markets 'may best be seen as places where different kinds of economies – subsistence, specialized, simple-commodity-producing, elite gift-exchange – come together' (Wilk 1989: 469). This typological approach to economic practice was reinforced by the preoccupations of historians and archaeologists whose focus on state-level societies highlighted an endogenous pathway of African progress and civility as part of a broader effort to counter Hegelian perspectives on African history (for a discussion, see Fuglestad 1992; Neale 1985; Stahl 2014). A preoccupation with states and their control of long-distance exchange inspired an early generation of historians who plumbed documentary and oral historical sources for insights into the forms and organization of long-distance trade (e.g., Arhin 1970; 1979; Posnansky 1971). Their contemporaries in anthropology and geography focused attention on what could be gleaned from twentieth-century sources regarding market locations, cycles, periodicity and their integrative functions (e.g., Hodder 1971; Smith

1971). However, a general turn from pre-colonial history in recent decades has diminished interest among historians in these issues at the same time as cultural anthropologists have mostly turned attention elsewhere, despite a few prominent exceptions (e.g., Guyer 2004; 1995; Şaul 2004). Despite growth in research focused on the archaeology of recent centuries over the last two decades (Reid and Lane 2004; Stahl 2009), a general absence of relevant archaeological evidence has meant that foundational early independence-period literature in West African history and anthropology continue to serve –whether implicitly or explicitly – as proxies for the character of markets and market places in centuries both proximate and distant. As such, archaeologists of the region have tended to model markets and market places analogically, if at all, and, as I discuss below, the effect has been to imply a degree of fixity that masks analytically what Guyer (2004: 30) has described as the 'historical constitution of conversions and wealth creation, under turbulent conditions.' Given the conditions of turmoil that characterized the nineteenth-century contexts in which some of the earliest European accounts of West African markets and market places were recorded, we should be circumspect about fulsome projections of the practices of nineteenth-century markets and market places back into earlier centuries, particularly given the changes that followed the shift to so-called 'legitimate trade' after the 1807 abolition of the slave trade in the British Empire (Grier 1981).

A tension underlying literature on ancient markets and debates in economic anthropology more generally centres on the value of comparative analyses. On the one hand, recent perspectives seem inclined toward the view that, due to their 'embedded' character, market forms varied considerably in relation to factors like the degree of administrative control, the role and balance of barter compared to transactions through a medium of exchange (i.e. currency), and the relationship of markets to interregional commerce (Garraty 2010). Other scholars work to identify common features of market systems through comparative analysis (e.g., Blanton and Fargher 2010). But, in keeping with anthropology's propensity for 'not so fast' responses to generalization, empirical studies of market systems in world areas that are 'not considered part of the economic lineage of today's

markets' are seen to hold out the promise of being 'equally instructive about early market development' (Garraty 2010: 31), as are genealogies of European market systems, a view that has informed a growing if geographically uneven interest among archaeologists in studies of markets and market places. Studying the history of non-European markets may thus be seen to 'provincialize Europe' (Chakrabarty 2000). However, in light of the growing evidence for a long-standing articulation of West African, Mediterranean and later European economies (MacDonald 2011; Mattingly 2011; Mattingly and Sterry 2013; Nixon 2017; Nixon *et al.* 2011), comparative analyses attuned to historical specificities are arguably the key to engaging with market histories across the ancient and ramifying networks that connected these world 'areas.'

Archaeological approaches to markets and market places

Outside Africa archaeologists have paid increasing attention to the role of markets and market places in ancient societies, even though investigation has been plagued by underdeveloped methods and a dearth of direct evidence. Recent literature underscores the daunting complexity of the pathways through which goods circulate and the ways in which markets 'articulate regional, local and household economies' (Wilk 1989: 469). Nonetheless, Mesoamerican archaeologists in particular have worked to develop multi-scalar approaches to the study of markets that aim to distinguish between different forms of exchange and determine how market activity is embedded in broader social and political contexts.[4] In the process they have asked a range of questions about markets, while also drawing attention to the problem of equifinality in addressing them (Feinman 2013: 46; Feinman and Garraty 2010: 178; Stark and Garraty 2010). Among their preoccupations have been questions about market origins and development; identifying the commodities exchanged, with discussions often linked to questions of craft specialization; and discerning the degrees and forms of control and cooperation within markets. The goal of identifying the physical manifestations of market places is motivated by concerns with their implications for reducing transaction costs and enabling predictable access to desired goods (e.g., Hirth 2010). Despite differences of approach, there is

general agreement on the need for multi-scalar perspectives and the value of multiple lines of evidence and clear definitions, some of which I review briefly here.

While market exchange can take place in a variety of settings (in homes, workshops, by itinerant traders, etc.; Hirth 1998: 454–455; see also Hill 1971), market places are distinguished as 'physical locations that accommodate regularized and orderly market exchanges' (Garraty 2010: 9). While they may be locations associated with assemblies of various forms (e.g., ceremonial gatherings; Stark and Garraty 2010: 35), dedicated market spaces are presumed to signal the institutionalization of market exchange with implications for infrastructure investment in the market place, its policing, and aspects of transport, including the maintenance of roads (Garraty 2010: 21). Investigating market places through their presumed spatial and architectural characteristics – what Hirth (1998: 453) termed a '*configurational* approach' – has been frustrated by the often ephemeral nature of market architecture and the routine cleaning of debris, a point to which I return below. Correspondingly, many scholars have relied on documentary sources to determine the presence of market places in various periods and places. Other scholars, working with what Hirth (*ibid*.) characterized as a '*contextual* approach,' have inferred the existence of market places from the presence of urban settlements and evidence for specialized crafting, an approach that suffers the limitation of assuming rather than investigating how urban dwellers and craft workers were provisioned. What Hirth (*ibid*.: 454–456) termed a *distributional* approach focuses on the provisioning function of market-place exchange. In market exchange, households augment domestic production by accessing goods through market places which can vary in their degree of centralization but – assuming that they operate independently of socio-political relations – provide households with equal access to goods. Even though differences in wealth may ultimately skew distribution, Hirth (*ibid*.: 455) argues that market societies are not characterized by the same unevenness in the distribution of high-value imported goods as would be the case if they were distributed through the hierarchical networks that characterize Polanyi's redistribution model.

Stark and Garraty (2010: 43) see value in Hirth's approach, but suggest that it fails to account for 'how ethnic or occupational identities might skew distributional patterns.' They also criticize its emphasis on household-level data over the insights that can be gleaned from regional-scale patterning. Their 'regional production-distribution approach' builds on the strengths of Hirth's focus on household consumption while drawing on additional evidence, particularly insights from provenance studies into specialized craft production and the circulations of and patterns in access to preciosities. A number of recent studies of Mesoamerican and Incan markets build on some variant of this methodology, using consistency of household access to durable, portable handicrafts (pottery, tools) as a material proxy for market activity, gauged through large-scale surface surveys (for a discussion, see Stark and Garraty 2010; also Feinman and Garraty 2010; Minc 2006). The wide range of high-quality data required to distinguish among the varied forms of exchange and to infer market-place activity (Stark and Garraty 2010: 52) means that equifinality remains a problem. Thus many scholars fall back on documentary sources and in the process develop insights skewed towards elites, thus glossing over the role of markets in the lives of commoners and non-elites.

Turning to the archaeology of West Africa, cellular phone technology may provide an apt analogy for our engagement with questions of exchange and markets. As Guyer (2004: 21) observed, the economies of Atlantic Africa did not conform readily to standard anthropological types (e.g., gift economies, tributary mode of production). By virtue of having ignored questions centred on markets, archaeologists working in West Africa have skipped over a 'land-line era' of substantivist-formalist debate and the associated tendency to apply totalizing idealized types to past economies (however, cf. the discussion in McIntosh 1999 on political typologies). While debate continues over the value of descriptive terminologies (e.g., Earle 2011; Nakassis *et al.* 2011), it is generally recognized today that few if any societies can be characterized by a single transactional mode, and that various group memberships (household, kin, sodality, polity) are likely to intersect with these modes in various ways with mosaic effects (Garraty 2010). Despite this growing acknowledgement of diversity and particularity,

however, I suspect that many Africanist archaeologists feel a certain unease about the way in which archaeological studies of markets continue to be associated with socio-political typologies that parse so-called 'egalitarian,' 'middle-range' and 'state' societies (e.g., some contributions to Garraty and Stark 2010). A substantive concern in addressing markets and market places as scalar phenomena needs to take account of the mosaic quality of West African societies (Stahl 2005) and the interactions among societies of varying scale (so-called states, chieftaincies and 'acephalous' societies) linked through transactional dynamics that included the acquisition and sale of people (Stahl 2015c).

Despite a recognition of markets as 'embedded' phenomena, the focus of anthropological archaeologists on market places as sites of economic activity and resource acquisition has meant that we have thought less deeply about them as sites through which communities produce and transform themselves and as locations for building 'cross-cultural social capital' (Porter *et al.* 2010: 37).[5] Here there is scope to engage with the literature on communities and constellations of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) and to consider market places among important 'spaces of experience' that also contribute to 'spaces known' (through stories, gossip, objects, and more; Gosselain 2008).[6] As Gosselain (2008; 2016) explores through his ethno-archaeological studies of learning and its implications for pottery-making practices, learning is a situated activity (Lave and Wenger 1991). The practical knowledge it produces is shaped by the contexts frequented by craft workers through 'daily activities, social interactions, economic exchanges, or travels' (Gosselain 2016: 46), which are what Gosselain calls 'spaces of experience.' But also contributing to processes of learning is 'representational' space—that known 'vicariously … from kin, friends, foreigners, or … the media' (*ibid.*). Both spaces are dynamic and formative of practice repertoires. Market places are sites of social interaction where goods and information are exchanged, contexts in which value is produced and experienced, and nodes within networks of connection. As such they are places where we might expect cultural brokers to operate in processes of imagination and alignment that give rise to broader constellations of practice (Wenger 1998; for a discussion, see Roddick and Stahl 2016b: 12–13).

Exposure to alternate 'ways of doing' through the interface of the market place has the potential to reconfigure conventional practice or alternately to harden extant repertories in the face of difference (Gosselain and Livingstone Smith 2005: 43; McNaughton 1992: 78–81). Inspired by exposure to exogenous alternatives, new practices may be combined with familiar ones (Gosselain 2008: 161–173) as craft workers experiment and improvise (Barber 2007), potentially aligning practices among groups and configuring variation in ways ill-captured by the notion of siloed ethnic groups (see also MacEachern 1994).

Archaeologists working in a variety of world areas have become attuned to the promise of technological style as an avenue into the study of learning networks and their implications for the formation of communities and more broadly constellations of practice (Crown 2007; Habicht-Mauche *et al.* 2006; Herbich 1987; see also contributions in Roddick and Stahl 2016a). However, this work has been more directly framed in relation to studies of craft production than to questions of markets and market places (however, cf. Gosselain 2016). Yet a focus on learning and practice has the potential to yield insights into market places as sites for the circulation of knowledge and processes of imagination and alignment that give rise to what Wenger (1998) characterizes as 'constellations of practice,' a concept that can be linked usefully to Guyer's explorations (2004; 2007) of the productivity of interfaces. I briefly illustrate some possibilities using archaeological contexts from the Volta basin in west central Ghana, but first offer a short summary of documentary perspectives on ancient West African markets.

Documentary perspectives on West African markets

Our understanding of West African market activity is substantially shaped by documentary sources which Stark and Garraty (2010: 37–38) describe as both a 'curse and a blessing.' With respect to the centuries prior to European colonization, the small number of available Arabic language sources focused on long-distance trade left the impression that trade, states and the spread of Islam went hand in hand (Levtzion 1976: 118; Levtzion and Hopkins 2000). Oral traditions and documentary sources alike agree that trade in gold provided an incentive for trans-Saharan connections from at least the late

eighth century, but not until al-Bakrī's mid-eleventh-century account based on travellers' descriptions do details of Sudanic trade and associated settlements emerge. The capital of ancient Ghana is described as comprising two towns, one inhabited by Muslims who played a key role in trade and aided administration through their literacy (Levtzion 1976: 120–121). While commercial activity is stressed as key to the configuration of these towns (e.g., Levtzion 1980: 153–170), secondary sources that draw on early documents provide little insight into market places. Neither do they shed light on the integration of settlements apart from towns in exchange networks, conveying a sense that, although caravans connected distant entrepôts, they had little effect on the so-called 'stateless peoples' or 'commoners' (Levtzion 1976: 118) who dwelled between them.

It has long been recognized that, for centuries prior to the emergence of the Atlantic trade, societies in the western Volta River basin (Fig. 9.1) participated in exchange networks that linked forested regions of what was later called the Gold Coast with Jenne Jeno on the middle Niger River (Bravmann and Mathewson 1970; Garrard 1980; Posnansky 1971; Wilks 1961). Exchange in marketable commodities (gold, perhaps kola nuts, ivory, copper alloys, likely salt and textiles, and probably also slaves) linked these regions from at least the early centuries of the second millennium AD, if not before. The general contours of this entanglement were described by mid-twentieth-century scholars based upon documentary sources. Jack Goody (1953; 1964) emphasized the role of a Mande-speaking diaspora in introducing both trade and Islam into the Volta basin, and later in linking Akan states with those of the Niger bend. Auriferous deposits in the forests and in the uplands of the western Volta basin, as well as kola nuts, a forest product, drew traders south from the Niger River. Entrepôts situated along the borderlands between forest and savanna provided locations for bulking goods and linking transport by pack animals with the human portage that dominated in more heavily vegetated and tsetse-infested regions. Entrepôts mentioned in Arabic texts include Bima (Bravmann and Mathewson 1970) and Begho (Beeo, Bew, Beego; Tauxier 1921: 70–77; Wilks 1961: 3), the former situated some 14 km south and west of Banda, the latter located in the southern reaches of Banda, roughly 40 km distant. The urban centre of

Jenne, located on the Inland Niger Delta, grew through trade relations with the western Volta basin and Akan forests to the south, reputedly being ‘one of the great markets of the Moslem world’ (Es-Sa’di, quoted in Wilks 1961: 8; Levtzion 1976: 132) by the mid-seventeenth century. Other market centres in the eastern Volta basin (e.g. Kitare and later Salaga; Mathewson 1972; Okoro 2008) linked the forested region to northeastern trade routes plied by Hausa traders. The sparse literature on these centres underscores the importance of inter-regional commerce in their emergence, but with scant mention of market places. Also characteristic is a tendency to present their histories in ethnicized terms (Goody 1964; Okoro 2008; Wilks 1961: 7–8) that construct the past in terms of bounded social groups whose emergence should be historically investigated rather than presumed.[7]

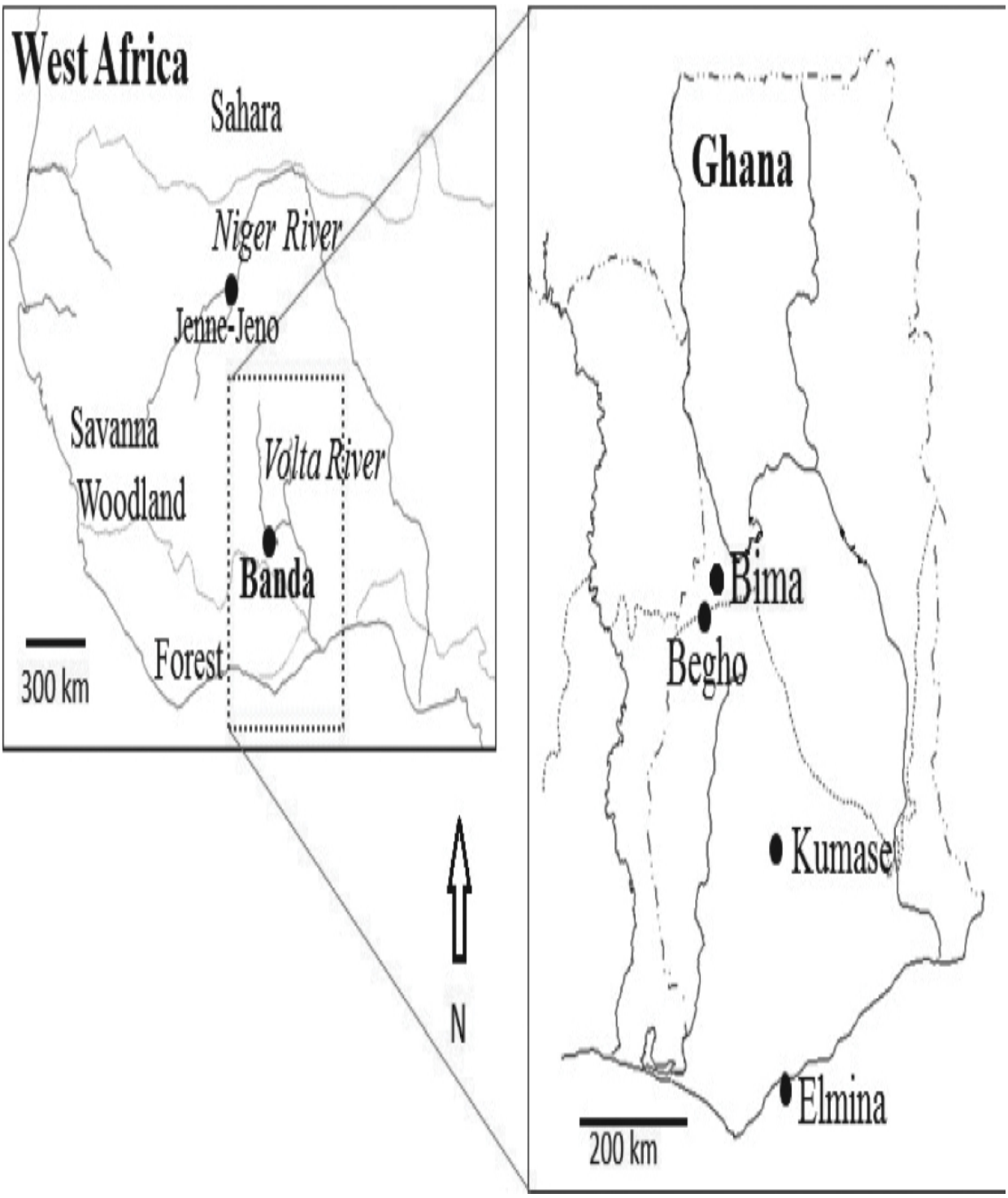


Fig. 9.1: Location of the Banda area and select places mentioned in the text.

While historians have developed a relatively fulsome understanding of trade, wealth and accumulation in Asante from the eighteenth century onward (Arhin 1979; McCaskie 1983; 1986; 1995; Wilks 1993), our

understanding of trade and marketing in the Gold Coast hinterlands prior to that century is a composite derived from temporally and geographically disparate sources cobbled together to yield a generalized picture. In general outline, it seems apparent that arterial long-distance trade routes passed through a mosaic of so-called state- and village-level societies, with societies in proximity to the trade routes more fully integrated into long-distance exchange than their less proximate neighbours (Swanepoel 2015: 47). During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the forested regions of the Gold Coast (prior to the emergence of the Asante state), large towns and their dependent hinterlands were connected through commercial networks that cut across political and linguistic boundaries, with towns competing for 'commercial and political paramountcy' (Kea 1982: 16). It is presumed that key to the provisioning of towns were periodic markets that provided food and crafts – implying both surplus and labour specialization – while the 'great commercial towns and fairs…engaged in intraregional and international commerce' (*ibid*.: 15). Agricultural surpluses are posited as having been drawn into the market through some combination of taxation by political authorities, the reliance of households on others for locally produced goods like pottery and metal, and perhaps the desire to acquire other goods from further afield that circulated through long-distance trade networks. Imported slave labour is presumed to have been an avenue through which agricultural intensification was achieved (*ibid*.: 20; Wilks 1993). The largest towns were those along the northern forest margins, with populations for Begho estimated at over 10,000 and for Bono Manso, Ahwene Koko and Old Bima at 5000 (Kea 1982: 34), each presumed to be serviced by a daily or periodic market place (*ibid*.: 40).

Further to the north, European sources describe vibrant markets in interior West Africa during the nineteenth century. Mungo Park's description of the Sansanding market (a town with an estimated population of 11,000) in the culminating months of his second expedition along the Niger River in October 1805 bears quotation at length:

The market-place is a large square, and the different articles of merchandise are exposed for sale on stalls covered with mats, to shade them from the sun. The market is crowded with people from morning to night: some of the stalls

contain nothing but beads; others indigo in balls; others wood-ashes in balls; others Houssa and Jinnie cloth. I observed one stall with nothing but antimony in small bits; another with Sulphur, and a third with copper and silver rings and bracelets. In the houses fronting the square is sold scarlet, amber, silks from Morocco, and tobacco, which looks like Levant tobacco, and comes by way of Timbuctoo. Adjoining this is the salt market, part of which occupies one corner of the square. A slab of salt is sold commonly for eight thousand cowries; a large butcher's stall, or shade, is in the centre of the square, and as good and fat meat sold every day as any in England. The beer market is at a little distance, under two large trees; and there are often exposed for sale from eighty to one hundred calabashes of beer, each containing about two gallons. Near the beer market is the place where red and yellow leather is sold. (Miller 1954, 361–362)

Several points stand out in this description: the presence of market-place infrastructure (an open space with stalls); the mix and range of commodities and their implied production chains, though with an emphasis on those obtained through long-distance trade; the use of cowries as a medium of exchange; and the role and importance of meat and beer as commodities, both of which generate durable remains that may provide a pathway for identifying market places in archaeological contexts, as I explore below.

Archaeological perspectives on West African markets

Despite, or perhaps because of documentary sources that reference the presence of long-distance trade and permanent commercial settlements linking West African societies through Saharan and Niger networks (see Levtzion and Hopkins 2000), the archaeological literature is remarkably silent on markets and market places. Despite early efforts to downplay the role of external trade in the emergence of urban civilizations in West Africa (McIntosh and McIntosh 1993), it is today well-recognized that pre-Islamic trade connections linked settlements south of the Sahara with others on its northern borders (MacDonald 2011). Considerable strides have been made in recent years in investigating aspects of long-distance trade (Devisse 1988; Haour *et al*. 2016; Magnavita 2003; for overviews, see Haour 2007; Mitchell

2005), as for example through excavations at Gao Saney (Cissé *et al.* 2013; Takezawa and Cissé 2012) and Tadmakka (Nixon 2009; 2017), the latter having become a major commercial settlement and node in the Islamic trans-Saharan trade by the middle of the eighth century AD. Moulds used to produce gold coins attest to links with a monetized Islamic system by the ninth century at Tadmakka (Nixon *et al.* 2011), and work at Essouk has broadened our understanding of the commodities exchanged beyond 'gold, slaves and ivory' to include staple cereals (including wheat) and bulky goods like shea butter (Nixon 2009: 250–251). At the same time, however, the role of markets and market places in supplying basic commodities like crafts and food has been little discussed. Similarly, despite arguments that urban configurations along the Niger River comprised 'articulated' groups pursuing specialized production and managing risk through exchange (McIntosh 1998: 56–57; Park 2010), extant literature is curiously silent on the role of markets and market places in these otherwise relatively well-documented studies.

Perhaps, as archaeologists, we have 'opted to take markets "for granted" because of documents and moved on' (Stark and Garraty 2010: 38). The unacknowledged problem with this in reference to West Africa is that documents are few and far between, particularly prior to the early decades of the twentieth century. Those that exist emphasize markets for long-distance exchange over the regional and inter-regional exchange that is likely to have played an important role in buffering conditions of uncertainty. So too there is a lingering tendency to treat the accounts of nineteenth-century travellers and early colonial officials as capturing durable 'tradition' rather than dynamic practice. This is perhaps particularly the case when it comes to local trade in foodstuffs and crafts, despite what we know of the dislocations that affected nineteenth-century life. Deferring to documents lends a sense of homogeneity, as understandings of the market systems derived from them are generalized through space and time, diverting attention from what was surely a complex and dynamic history of the exchange, valuation and circulations of foods, crafts and precious goods.[8] We should anticipate that markets and market places were reconfigured as a result of both episodic and recurrent turbulence, as for example that described by Nixon (2009: 250) for

Tadmakkah during the fourteenth century, when Berber groups wrested control of the region from Mali. As Guyer advocates, we need to shift perspectives from a structured view of exchange to one attuned to the 'historical constitution of conversions and wealth creation, under turbulent conditions' (2004: 30; also Meillassoux 1971b: 52) and remember that we should expect markets and market places to be shaped by non-linear, dynamic process (Stark and Garraty 2010: 34–35).

Market-place traces and market dynamics in Banda

What might our archaeological datasets from West Africa, limited and patchy though they might be, tell us about the relationship between the processes we parse as 'economic' and 'social' in relation to market places (e.g. craft specialization and learning, movements of goods and knowledge processes of valuation; cf. Nkassis *et al*. 2011: 182)? By comparison to other world areas, we lack the intensive regional surveys needed to support Stark and Garraty's (2010) 'regional production-distribution approach' and the extensive intra-site household sampling required for Hirth's (1998) 'distributional approach.' However, as I argue below, our lower resolution archaeological data has the potential to lend insights into the presence and significance of market places if approached through the lens of depositional practice and the implications of market-place exchange for circulations of knowledge as well as of goods. I explore these possibilities through contexts I know best: those of the ethnically and linguistically diverse Banda area in west central Ghana (Fig. 9.1), which, in recent centuries, has been home to the Banda Paramount chieftaincy that encompasses some two dozen villages and is home to five ethnic-linguistic groups. Here, since 1986, I have conducted research on how practice in this rural village setting has been configured in relation to shifting interregional and intercontinental entanglements over the last millennium.

The Banda Research Project (BRP) has drawn on multiple lines of evidence to investigate how daily life – including food ways, craft production settlement and trade – was reconfigured over time in relation to broader Saharan trade connections from the early second millennium AD; through the emergence and intensification of Atlantic networks from the

sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries; by the region's incorporation into the expansionist Asante state from the late eighteenth century; and by the imposition of formal colonial rule at the end of the nineteenth century (Stahl 2007). Our work has involved both a regional survey (Smith 2008) and site testing, combined with more extensive excavations at three sites that provide a basis for phase designations that have guided our explorations of continuity and change. While acknowledging that such phase designations highlight variations between phases and homogenize practice within them,[9] here I use them as a shorthand to facilitate temporal comparison.

The Ngre phase (*c*. AD 1250–1500) coincides with the period when the connections of Volta basin societies to the Niger River intensified. The Kuulo phase (ca. AD 1400– 1600) is associated with the zenith of Niger River connections and the emergence of Atlantic ones. Both phases overlap with occupation at Begho (Posnansky 1976; 1987). Given Banda's proximity to the town sites of Old Bima and Begho, it seems likely that Ngre- and Kuulo-phase villagers had the scope to participate, if unevenly, in the general 'market sphere' of these towns. The Makala phase (ca. 1725–1920s) is divided into an early (to 1820) and later (after 1890) phase. Oral histories associate the earlier phase with the period when Nafaanra-speaking peoples began to settle from the north and west, after which the Asante imposed their hegemony over the historically documented Banda chieftaincy (Stahl 1991; 2001). The later Makala phase coincides with the period when British colonial officials were working to extend colonial authority over the western Volta basin. As detailed elsewhere (Stahl 2008; 2015b; 2015c), shifting interregional and intercontinental connections were associated with turbulence (Guyer 2004; 2007) and improvisation (Barber 2007) as villagers reconfigured their practice in relation to broader political and economic entanglements and interfaces. I briefly summarize what is known of economic patterns in these phases, paying particular attention to ceramic data that inform us about communities of practice and point out the potential implications of local and regional market activity for generating broader constellations of practice (Stahl 2016b).

Niger River connections are attested in Ngre-phase contexts (from about AD 1250) in the form of copper alloys, to which village metal-workers

appear to have had ready access, alongside small quantities of imported beads of glass and stone that probably entered the area in finished form. The source of copper probably lay in the Sahara, while the provenance of glass beads points to connections with the Mediterranean world and beyond. Nonetheless, Ngre-phase sites comprise villagesized settlements characterized by relatively low mounds, some formed through the collapse of structures, others more clearly built up through practices of refuse disposal that resulted in deep middens. Site density on the landscape is low (Smith 2008: 215). Relatively extensive excavations at one site, Ngre Kataa, have yielded evidence of the production of pottery and metals consistent with exchange, but less clearly for physical market places. The quality and character of Ngre-phase pottery suggests that pottery manufacture was a specialist, albeit probably part-time craft, with potters east and west of the Banda hills producing pottery of similar style using locally available raw materials.[10] Wares produced west of the hills found their way into sites east of the hills, and it is likely that pots produced in the latter area also circulated through exchange. Metallurgy was a specialist craft pursued by Ngre-phase villagers as well. A metallurgical workshop at Ngre Kataa (Stahl 2015b) attests to the involvement of craft workers in the production of iron implements, including arrow points, knives and hoes, alongside lost-wax cast copper alloy objects at a scale that clearly exceeded village-level consumption. Based on the differential timing of drying conditions along the Niger River compared to the western Volta River basin,[11] Logan (2012: 172–177) argues that iron produced in Banda and its environment may have been making its way north, where supplies of abundant firewood needed for iron-smelting were being reduced by drought and human exploitation. In sum, villagers' involvement in long-distance exchange relations is implied in the acquisition of some raw materials (copper alloys) and ornaments (small numbers of glass and carnelian beads), while regional exchange is attested in the circulation of crafts and presumably implied also in crafting households augmenting their food supplies.

Kuulo-phase (from *c*. AD 1400) craft practice is genealogically connected to that of the preceding (and potentially somewhat overlapping) Ngre phase. Villagers practised pottery manufacture and metallurgy of both

iron and copper alloys alongside ivory working (Stahl 2007, 62–66). In contrast to the diversity of ceramic fabrics that characterized Ngre-phase pottery, Kuulo-phase pottery was dominated by a single compositional group. Its source probably lay to the east of the hills, its distinctive chemistry was probably a result of the addition of finely crushed iron slag as a tempering agent. The increased homogenization of ceramic fabric and the apparent localization of pottery manufacture east of the Banda hills suggest increased specialization in this period (Stahl *et al.* 2008). The volume of iron slag recovered from village middens leaves little doubt that iron was produced in excess of villagers' needs and, like pottery, implies circulation through exchange, despite the drier conditions that prevailed in the Kuulo phase (Logan 2012: 234; Logan and Stahl 2017). Notably, despite the recovery of spindle whorls at Begho and documentary references to Begho as a site where cloth was produced, neither Kuulo- nor Ngre-phase contexts have yielded spindle whorls. Whether cloth was a prestige good unavailable to villagers in this period or a product obtained through exchange is unknown, but the presently available evidence suggests that it was not produced in Banda villages during these times.

While I have published evidence in support of the hypothesis of expanded craft production and growing involvement in long-distance exchange and acknowledged that 'finished goods had to be distributed,' I have previously argued that 'we can only speculate on whether finished goods were transported to markets, goods were exchanged on an itinerant basis, or consumers traveled to production centers to obtain desired goods. All three models are historically documented for the area' (Stahl 2007: 66). We might imagine evidence of currency as a way to strengthen the possibility of market-place exchange. While a medium of exchange is often associated with such exchange, it need not be (Stark and Garraty 2010: 35). Cowries imported from the Indian Ocean, first via Saharan networks, but more substantially through Atlantic exchange, in which they became the shell currency of the slave trade (Hogendorn and Johnson 1986; see also Şaul 2004), are notably rare in Ngre- and Kuulo-phase contexts. Indeed, Swanepoel (2015: 47–49) describes the small quantities of cowries recovered from sites in northern Ghana, even those dating to periods in

which documentary sources attest to their use as a well-established currency,[12] as for example at the nineteenth-century Kasana market established by the Zaberma in Ghana's Upper West Region, where Nkumbaan's excavations yielded only two cowry shells (Nkumbaan 2008: 103). The few cowries recovered from Ngre Kataa were among the interior contents of a perforated shrine pot placed among metal-working features in a workshop setting (Stahl 2015a: 61). Gold dust was another medium of exchange that documentary evidence indicates was widely used throughout the region in recent centuries (see Garrard 1980), the use of which is difficult to detect archaeologically outside of the standardized weights that were the basis of a system of equivalencies derived from Islamic measures, which have so far proved challenging to identify.[13]

However, in light of subsequent work for this paper, I note evidence that potentially aligns with oral history linking Kuulo Kataa to a market place. During an early site survey, a Kuulo elder and custodian of a shrine located on the site drew our attention to a low open spot, devoid of mounds, which he attributed to the presence of an ancient market place. In a follow-up interview, the elder linked the origins of the market to the period before Nafana settlers came to the region, describing the market as an event that occurred on a specific day in a six-day cycle.[14] Test excavations in the supposed market place yielded little in the way of material culture and no evidence of features – unsurprisingly in light of the ephemeral character of market architecture and the likelihood that market areas are routinely swept and debris removed. However, revisiting the possibility that the site was associated with a periodic market place may account for two patterns that distinguish Kuulo Kataa among Kuulo-phase sites investigated to date, as well as from earlier Ngre- and later Makala-phase sites: 1) the remarkable density of artefacts and animal bone in middens at Kuulo Kataa, well exceeding that of similar depositional contexts at Ngre- or Makala-phase sites; and 2) the presence and prevalence at Kuulo Kataa of distinctive globular jars with heavily pitted interiors that we have long suspected were the result of repeated exposure to fermented liquid (i.e. beer).

As highlighted in Mungo Park's market description quoted at length above, meat and beer are commodities characteristic of market places.

Meillassoux (1971b: 84) reinforces this point, citing nineteenth-century accounts that associate drinking millet beer and access to meat as characteristic features of rural markets. Of note is his observation that large animals are butchered infrequently in small villages, given the small number of potential consumers and the need for the timely consumption of fresh meat. Examining present-day practices further, we find that meat is typically sold off the bone in small packets, with the implication that bone is deposited in the surroundings of the butcher's locale, though it may also make its way into soup pots round the neighbourhood. Extrapolating from this, the upshot may well be that higher concentrations of bone were deposited in middens in the surroundings of market places compared to villages without such periodic gatherings.

This offers a potential explanation for the high density of animal bone documented for Kuulo Kataa, particularly in middens, compared to earlier Ngre- and later Makala-phase contexts, as depicted in Figure 9.2. The graph depicts the number of individual bone specimens (NISP) per cubic metre from varying site contexts through time. Midden contexts at Kuulo Kataa yielded close to twice the amount of bone per unit volume as middens at Ngre Kataa and several times that of Early Makala phase middens, a pattern that is not accounted for by increased bone fragmentation, the degree of which does not vary notably over time. Given the relative comparability in village size, the possibility that the notably greater density of bone relates to butchery for market exchange is intriguing. While species identification is hampered by fragmentation, bovids account for a notable proportion of identifiable mammal bone from the Banda area sites and include both wild (various antelopes) and domestic (cattle, sheep and goat) species. Figure 9.3 shows the density (NISP/m^3) of bovid size classes recovered from archaeological contexts at sites that precede the establishment of substantive Niger River contacts (Volta phase sites, ca. AD 1100–1250) through the Late Makala-phase contexts occupied on the eve of colonial rule (Fig. 9.3). Size 1 bovids are those akin to duikers, size 2–3 bovids are those akin to sheep and goats in size, and size 4–5 are those akin to cattle. Small bovids are never common, while the densities of sizes 2–3 and 4–5 show considerable

variation across the sequence. Size 2–3 bovids are more prominent than size 4–5 throughout the sequence, but with a notable increase at Kuulo Kataa.

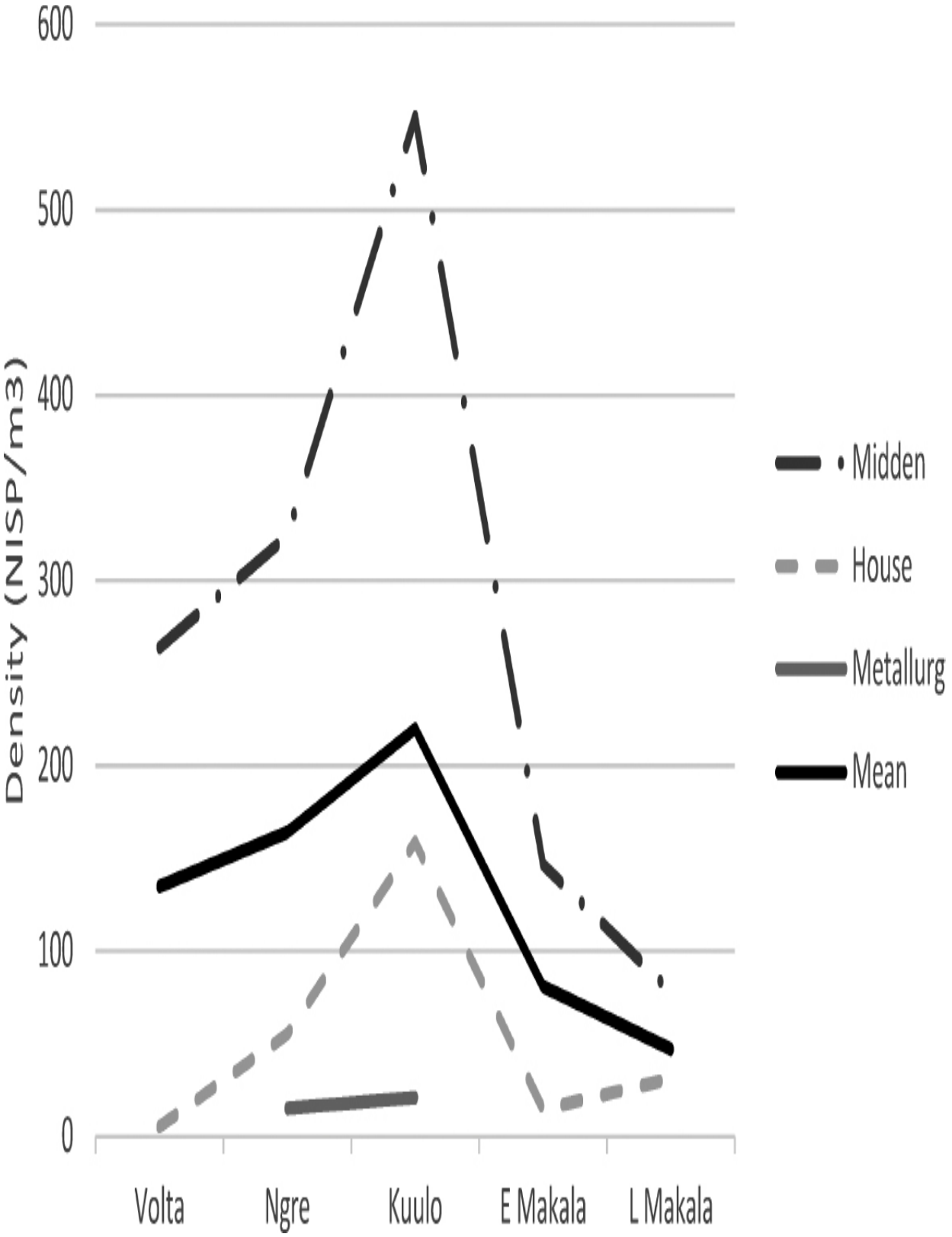


Fig. 9.2: Density of recovered fauna (number of identified specimens or NISP/m^3) by context type (midden, house, metallurgical workshop) and period (Volta, Ngre, Kuulo, Early and Late Makala).

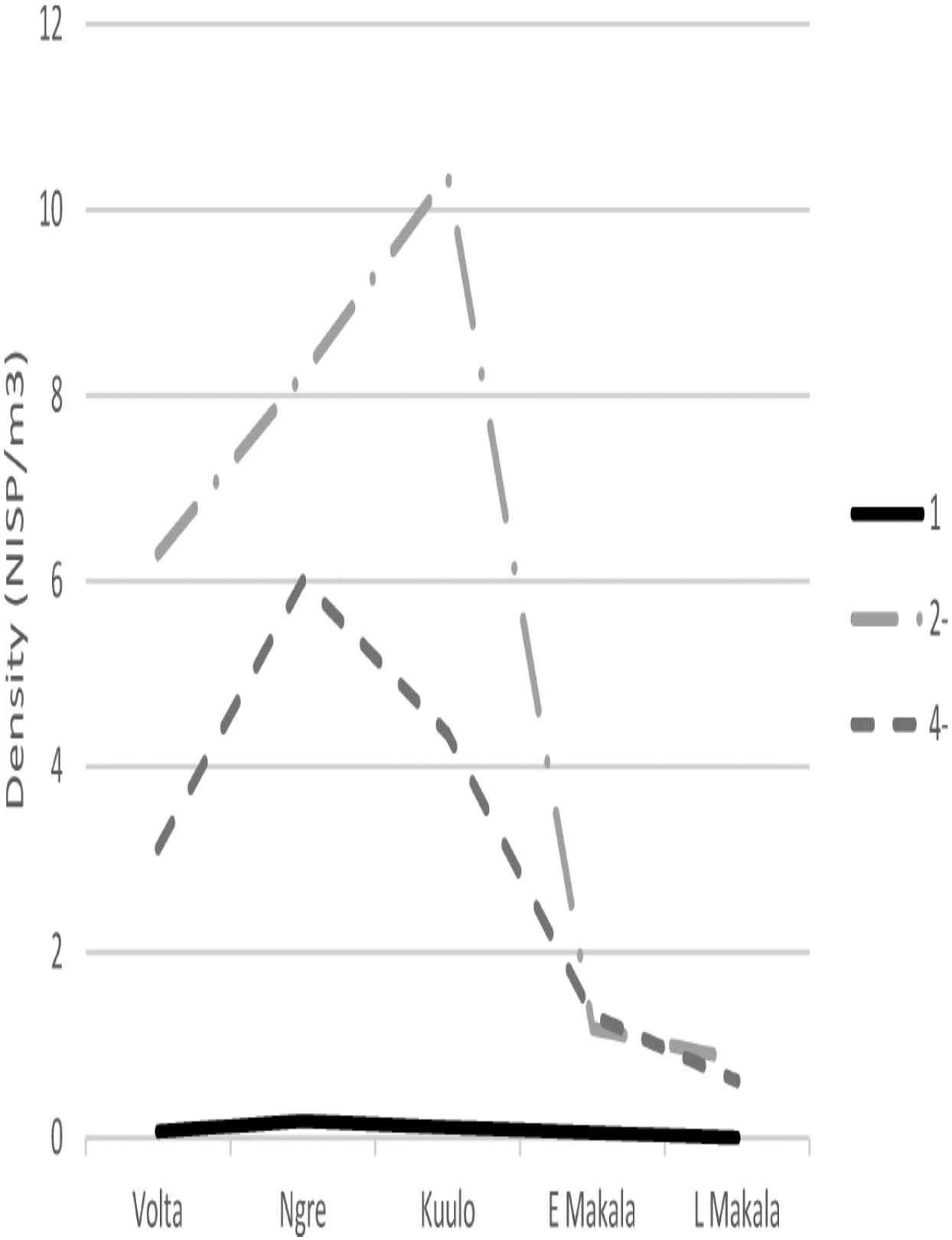


Fig. 9.3: Density of bovid size classes by period. Size 1: duiker size; Size 2–3: sheep/goat size; Size 4–5: cattle size.

As described elsewhere (Stahl 1999), the faunal assemblage at Kuulo Kataa is also characterized by greater faunal diversity compared to later period sites. Wild species predominate and include both dangerous and distant species, hinting at the activities of specialized hunters and/or exchange. If the notable increase in the overall density of faunal remains at Kuulo Kataa is associated with increased market activity, as suggested above, the data on bovids hints that size 4–5 bovids were less a focus than size 2–3. Elsewhere Logan and I (2017) explore the archaeological evidence of plant and animal use in relation to a period of protracted and deepening droughts that coincide with the Kuulo-phase occupation, which appear to have been greater in magnitude than those of recent decades and are manifested in high-resolution data from the deep coring of Lake Bosumtwi, located roughly 200 km to the south of Banda (Shanahan *et al.* 2009). Several surprising trends emerge (see Logan and Stahl 2017). For example, though maize makes its first appearance in Banda during the Kuulo phase (Logan 2012: 228), it remains a marginal crop, despite its potential for increased yields over the indigenous pearl millet that remains ubiquitous in Kuulo-phase assemblages, despite deteriorating environmental conditions.[15] The presence and general ubiquity of distinctively decorated globular jars with interior pitting suggestive of exposure to a fermented substance like beer indicate that at least a portion of the millet was consumed as beer. That these pots are, based on current understanding, associated with Kuulo Kataa and apparently not other sites is another coincidence potentially consistent with their use in a market-place setting. Though uncommon, the presence of oil palm (*Elaeis guineensis*) and grain of paradise (*Aframomum melegueta*) in Kuulo-phase contexts hints at expanding connections with forested regions to the south, while coastal connections are suggested by the recovery of a single bone from a Great White Shark (*Carcharadon* cf. *carcharis*). Notable too is the appearance of tobacco, another trade crop, evidenced by seeds recovered from two domestic structures (Logan 2012: 237) and more fully by locally made smoking pipes, which, in contrast to the pattern of localized pottery-making east of the hills, were produced and circulated both east and west of the Banda hills (Stahl *et al*. 2008: 377). A substantial spike in the occurrence of smoking pipes in later mound contexts at Kuulo Kataa

is another intriguing pattern that may relate to social practices linked to markets (Logan and Stahl 2017: 1390).

My recent reading and thinking on market places has also led me to reflect on the evidence for communities and constellations of practice. Elsewhere (Stahl 2016b) I focus attention on relatively rare ceramic types (two jar and two bowl forms) that INAA analysis demonstrates were produced at multiple locales east and west of the Banda hills during the Ngre and Kuulo phases. The jars show notable similarities in form and decorative treatment to vessels recovered in small quantities from sites elsewhere in the Volta River basin (Buipe and Daboya) and from town sites to the south (Begho) and southeast (Bono Manso). Both are notable for their 'showy' qualities: their distinctive rim forms, and the application of red pigment and/or luminous mica slip. We currently lack evidence to assess whether these were produced in the Banda area and circulated elsewhere through exchange, or whether the similarities of form and decorative treatment were the product of a broader constellation of practice that resulted from what Wenger (1998: 110) calls 'brokers', who introduced new possibilities based upon their broader knowledge and experience (Roddick and Stahl 2016: 9–12). If the latter, they hint at processes of alignment and imagination through objects and imply a web of connections among dispersed communities that defy the tidy boundaries between ethnic or tribal entities that have provided the restrictive lens through which historical processes have been viewed (cf. Amselle 1998; see also Stahl 1991; 2013). Intriguingly the rare bowl forms, also decorated with the distinctive and eye-catching mica slip, do not appear to have circulated in similar fashion. Based on the available evidence, these Ngre- and Kuulo-phase forms circulated within the Banda region but apparently not outside it. That similar forms of these eye-catching vessels were produced east and west of the Banda hills with some variation implies the circulation of knowledge across the hills that may well have been fostered by market-place interactions, akin to the way in which Gosselain (2016) describes market places as sites where potters observe the products of others and at times share knowledge. As such, tracing the contours of communities and constellations of practice through comparative analyses of

technological style combined with robust provenance data has the potential to yield proxy measures of market involvement and dynamics over time.[16]

Turning briefly to the Makala phase, the period sees little evidence of northern exchange but instead an increased tethering of Banda's fortunes to Atlantic networks, first through its forcible incorporation into Asante, and later through the imposition of British colonial rule. As detailed elsewhere, this period sees a constricting of craft production and regional exchange that is likely to be connected with the growing uncertainty and violence that characterized the Volta River basin, particularly during the nineteenth century. The siphoning off of male labour in the early twentieth century, aided by the requirement that newly imposed taxes be paid in colonial currency, contributed to a shifting balance in gendered activities (Stahl and Cruz 1998), with implications for production, marketing and market-place practice. One effect was that the production and circulation of crafts became more localized over time, while the complement of fauna suggests a growing reliance on the garden hunting of smaller wild fauna, marked by a notable increase in the consumption of rodents and, as illustrated in Figure 9.3, a notable decline in the density of bovid bones in Makala contexts (see also Logan and Stahl 2017). Though it is unclear if the periodic small rotational markets documented for the twentieth century were also characteristic of the nineteenth century, we see clear evidence of a contraction in regional exchange in our ceramic provenance data (Stahl *et al.* 2008: 378) that is corroborated by insights from oral history. At the same time, however, European imports in the form of bottle glass and ball-clay smoking pipes made inroads for the first time at the end of the nineteenth century. Relations were clearly in flux, and the substantive dislocation and turbulence that were recurrent features of life in the western Volta River basin from at least the early decades of the nineteenth century should be kept firmly in mind whenever we feel tempted to draw on accounts from this period as insights into 'traditional practice' that can be extrapolated to earlier times.

Concluding thoughts

Several observations emerge from this exploration of issues and possibilities in studying pre-colonial West African market places as points of interface.

First, despite the prevalence of market places in West Africa and their role in shaping substantivist versus formalist debates, a curious silence has prevailed in African archaeology on the topic of markets and market places, notwithstanding a sustained and growing focus among scholars on long-distance trade and its political and economic implications. Limitations of evidence do not fully account for this silence. Second, the typological approaches that have shaped market thinking carry durable traces of socio-evolutionary schemes and inadequately capture the complexity of interfaces between societies of varying scale. These interfaces were key to processes of valuation, circulations of knowledge and improvisational practice, underscoring the broader ramifications of market places as being more than just about economic exchange. Third, while specific historical conjunctures are key to understanding markets and market places, the historical study of West African examples is broadly relevant and arguably crucial to understanding the emergence and operations of markets and market places outside the continent, with entanglements that extend to at least the beginning of the Christian era. Fourth, while we should strive for a level of methodological rigour and be mindful of the limits created by equifinality, as have our Mesoamericanist colleagues in their studies of market and market places, I argue that it is possible to draw on low-resolution data to infer the presence of market places while also needing to recognize the problematic aspects of simply imagining market practice through the lens of ethnography or recent history. Among promising lines of evidence are aspects of depositional practice (scalar differences in refuse accumulation not accounted for by site size) and insights from studies of technological style and provenance into the scale and character of communities and constellations of practice. Grounded in the study of objects, this offers a conceptual alternative to the projection of ethnicized identities drawn from twentieth-century accounts on to a deeper past and affords an opportunity to examine cultural practice as emergent in relation to changing interfaces. And finally, as exemplified by the brief overview of evidence from the Banda sequence, the trajectories of market and market-place practices are complex and non-linear. An intriguing issue that merits exploration (Logan and Stahl 2017) is how proximate involvement in market-place practices may have

enabled Kuulo-phase villages to weather the challenges of sixteenth-century droughts in ways that declined with deepening entanglements in Atlantic networks and the imposition of colonial rule.

Notes

1. Following Garraty (2010: 5), I use the term 'market' to refer to commercial activity 'predicated on the principles of market exchange of alienable commodities' (*ibid:* 6) and 'market place' to refer to dedicated spaces within which commercial activity is conducted. Whereas Garraty stresses market development as a 'process of institutionalization' (*ibid.:* 7), I find value in centering attention on market activity as practice, the 'market' as an 'institution' emerging from practice.
2. Thorough volume indexing is a dying art; however, a quick perusal of relevant volume indexes barely registers the term 'markets.' The entry in Ogundiran and Falola (2007: 505) is telling of emphases within African archaeological studies: 'market towns. *See* trade centers.' Mitchell's (2005) encyclopedic summary of *African Connections* is also emblematic in that 'trade' has various entries and subentries in the index, while the terms 'market' and 'market place' do not appear at all.
3. Despite criticisms of unproductive 'market/no market' dichotomies and the recognition that exchange is often multi-faceted and its forms related in non-linear fashion, typological approaches and socio-evolutionary premises continue to underpin some contemporary archaeological literature on ancient markets, particularly in Meso- and South America, where much recent and methodologically innovative work on the topic has focused. See Blanton and Fargher (2010) for a critique of both neoclassical economic theory and Marxist and substantivist perspectives that nonetheless perpetuates social evolutionary thinking. I suspect that this contributes to a seeming reluctance on the part of archaeologists working in West Africa to take up questions centered on markets, though as I discuss below, issues with evidence have also been a factor.
4. See Garraty (2010: 6–7) for a discussion of embeddedness.

5. Porter *et al*. (2010) remind us that market-place social processes included conflict.
6. As Daaku (1971: 179) observed of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Akan societies, participation in extra-local trade was widespread, enabling 'people to extend their scope of experience by travelling into distant parts.'
7. A growing literature underscores identification in West Africa as a historically dynamic phenomenon at the same time as it illuminates the role of colonial overrule and other twentieth-century processes in shaping a perception of so-called 'tribal' or ethnic identities as fixed (Hawkins 2002; Lentz 2006; Lentz and Nugent 2000; on Banda, see Stahl 1991).
8. There is an interesting parallel in the tendency to develop generalized environmental reconstructions from limited data points, masking the considerable regional variation that emerges from a closer study of local proxies (Logan 2012: 169–176; Mayor *et al.* 2005).
9. See Stahl (2016b) for a discussion and for research strategies aimed at addressing this issue.
10. As described elsewhere, the geologically variable substrate of the Banda area makes it possible to chemically distinguish clays derived from areas east and west of the Banda hills which prominently bisect the region (Stahl *et al.* 2008). Through a combination of instrumental neutron activation analysis, petrographic analysis and laser ablation-inductively coupled plasma-mass spectrometry, we have identified a series of chemically and mineralogically distinct compositional groups, some associated with clay sources located east and others west of the hills. The distinctive chemistry of one group in particular ('K1') is associated with the inclusion of crushed iron slag as a 'tempering' material in the ceramic fabric.
11. Archaeobotanical remains attest relative wet conditions in Banda at the time of Ngre phase occupation (Logan 2012).
12. For example, George Ferguson, a Fanti British agent who in the 1890s toured the region north of Asante in what was to become the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast Colony, described the use of cowries as a

medium of exchange alongside ivory, gold, cattle and slaves (Arhin 1974: 69, 129). See Swanepoel (2015: 49–52) for a discussion of the values and uses of cowries in northern Ghana, which included bridewealth payments, adornment, divination and more.

13. Garrard (1980: 29–33, 42), in his comprehensive study of Akan gold weights, makes a case that rounded potsherds recovered from sites in the western Volta River basin served as gold weights and that twenty examples from Begho conformed to the Islamic *mitkal* and *uqiya* standards. We have recovered many rounded sherds from sites in Banda, but our larger samples do not confirm the stepped weight increments described by Garrard (Stahl 1999: 38–40). While I initially interpreted a figurative brass miniature from Kuulo Kataa as a potential gold weight (2001: 140–141) my more recent thinking, based on the recovery of additional examples from Ngre and Kuulo Kataas, is that they were more likely divination aids (Stahl 2013). A miniature lost-wax-cast spoon recovered from a household mound at Ngre Kataa may be a more likely candidate for a gold weight, given its resemblance to gold dust spoons.
14. The following is from an August 1995 interview with Kwesi Millah conducted by Leith Smith: 'The old lady who originally descended from the sky at Kuulo [the Kuulo ancestress, Wurache] was at a farm one day when a man appeared. When asked from where he had come he said "the sky." The man wanted to trade. The woman said "You need people and a place to trade," so they agreed to have the market near where they had met. The trader would bring other traders, and the woman would bring people. Every sumbɔɔ [day in the six-day cycle], the man came from the sky, and the people came from the surrounding area. When the (original) man came, he would spread a hide to sit on for the day and then go away at the end of the day. He himself did not trade… The traders mainly brought cloth woven in strips from the north. The Kuulo people traded mostly foodstuffs.'
15. Based on its differential presence in Kuulo-phase house mounds, Logan (2012: 237–239) suggests that maize may have been accessed by

villagers through trade, more as a novelty than as a crop to make up for 'caloric shortfalls … in the middle of a severe drought' (*ibid.:* 239).

16. Space precludes consideration here, but market dynamics bear consideration in relation to what is increasingly recognized as the improvisational character of West African ritual practice and the transactional dynamics surrounding shrines (Allman and Parker 2005; Parish 1999; Parker 2004). Travel promoted by market systems expands the space of experience and exposes people to new practices (Gosselain 2016) which can provide the impetus for improvisational combinations and innovation. See Stahl (2014; 2015b; 2018) for an exploration of shrine practices in Banda.

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Chapter 10

An economy between the markets: The case of the central market in Tamale, northern Ghana

Geraldine Schmitz

The ominous market

What is ‘the market’? Our economy often seems to us as if it were a foreign ruler, an autonomous, unstoppable power. The various economies of the world are more and more linked in an opaque system. We feel subjected to the rules of an ominous invisible hand. If we take a look at the business section of a newspaper or watch the news, ‘the market’ often appears as something strange we cannot control. We read sentences like ‘the market is booming’, ‘the market is falling’, ‘the market is losing its value’, we hear about currencies rising and falling, and once in a while we hear about financial bubbles, which inevitably seem to burst, at which point the market breaks down and descends into chaos.

Despite this chaos, the economy is said to be logical, regulating our markets through supply and demand. However, when we put our money in a bank, it isn’t our money anymore, but is used by the bank to create credits for other people and for itself. Also, money is used to buy other money, namely other currencies. Obviously ‘the market’, whatever it may be, transforms money from a medium of exchange into a good which is different from all other goods, generating its own value through interest, continually growing and never deteriorating (Gesell 1949). Imagine storing away some tomatoes for a year: they will rot. If you put your money into a

bank account, on the other hand, it will increase. This is because you have lent this money to the bank, which will pay you interest on it but also lend it on to other people and earn even more profit for itself thanks to the interest it charges. Money is used as a good, as a medium of exchange and as capital, even though it has the most unstable and most unpredictable value of all goods. ‘Our market’ grows and grows, with some people earning an immense profit out of it. And we need to hope that our money is still safe in the bank. That is what many Cypriots did in 2013, and then their money was gone. The invisible hand, ‘the market’, took its tribute. Obviously, therefore, our economy is not just driven by supply and demand, but also by debts, politics and the desire for profit.

Concluding this foregoing excursus, the definition of ‘the market’ is pretty negative and fits the theories of Karl Polanyi, Adam Smith and Karl Marx. In ancient Greece too, ‘the market’ was seen in different ways: in his account of Socrates, Xenophon describes the market as the place where most people come together. From Plato and Aristotle we know that they viewed the market as Xenophon did. Here, however, we are dealing with a tangible, spatial location: Plato, Aristotle and Seneca described a new form of the market, namely the market of the Sophists, whom they criticized for an economic practice that has become ordinary. Here we scientists in particular are being addressed, as what they are talking about is the sharing of knowledge for money (Hénaff 2009). But goods are also exchanged for money through supply and demand, and competition regulates the price as the famous invisible hand:



Fig. 10.1: A petty trader in Tamale (photo by Martin Jaskulla, 2015).

Give me that which I want, and you shall have this which you want, is the meaning of every search offer; and it is in this manner did we obtain from one another the far greater part of those good offices which we stand in need of. It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer or the baker, did we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their Interests. (Smith 2007: 16)

This is the market as a profit-oriented, impersonal invisible hand, a notion that would later attract a lot of criticism, though is nonetheless correct. Among those who criticized was Karl Marx, who saw a dramatic problem in the impersonality of exchange, the associated monetary economy and the shift in values (Marx 2011). Polanyi made similar criticisms as Marx.[1]

For Polanyi, there are three basic principles of economics: redistribution, reciprocity and exchange. Redistribution and reciprocity are found in communities and households; they are personal economies. But, among other things, because of the ‘capitalist’ exploitation of money, exchange is no longer tied to social dynamics, to the consumer or reproduction, but to

profit. The payoff, according to Marx and Max Weber as well, is reinvested in order to increase the profit. The market in Polanyi's terms is not a local place, but a growth-based mechanism with a destructive tendency that is totally disembedded from society (Polanyi 1957; 2014).

In the history of concepts, the market is becoming more and more ideologically charged. Political parties distinguish themselves with reference to their perspectives on 'the market'. Libertarians find it efficient and have a positive attitude towards it, communists regard it as inefficient and criticize it, and socialists acknowledge its efficiency, but also see its self-destructive potential. We could continue going down this list to the end, but ultimately the fact remains: 'the market', whatever that may be, is no longer just an economic term. Ronald Reagan spoke of the 'magic of the market' which has imprinted and conditioned political ideologies and is confusing. In fact, though, there is not just one market (Swedberg 2007): Marcel Hénaff calls the market a 'global dimension of society' and points out that there cannot be even one clear definition (Hénaff 2009). However, for an economic anthropologist this is quite frustrating, so at this point I will introduce two broad definitions of Richard Swedberg's, which can help us deal with the concept as a first step: first, the market is an arena in which direct exchange takes place; and secondly, the market is a social mechanism for economic growth. The first carries the potential for social dimensions and personal exchange. The second describes the interdependence of all markets that promote our prosperity on the one hand and our exploitation on the other hand, hardly requiring personal relationships at all (Swedberg 2007). Are these therefore two sides of the same coin?

How to become a market researcher in the not so strict sense of the term

The example of the Tamale Central Market in Ghana shows that defining 'the market' is not necessarily a matter of seeing it as two sides of the same coin. It demonstrates that the dualisms that many disciplines (including anthropology) favour, like 'capitalist vs. non-capitalist', 'formalism vs.

substantivism', 'informal vs. formal', 'moral/personal vs. impersonal' etc. do not help in the understanding of economic practices.

The traders of Tamale have a positive impact on the entire Ghanaian economy and stabilize their currency, the Cedi,[2] through their trading strategies and the way they handle their *Market Money*. Ghana is also tied to the global economic system, and even in the most remote local markets traders experience fluctuations in the financial system. Traders' strategies, however, ensure that the entire Ghanaian economy is stabilized – not just the real economy, but also the national currency, the Cedi – by minimizing the negative impact of the global financial system, despite which their government views them as an economic and cultural drain.

Before describing how the market responds to trading strategies and *Market Money*, some details should be given about my research methods, as there is so little literature on African markets except for the works of Gracia Clark, Polly Hill, Paul Bohannan and George Dalton. In my view, one reason for this is the complexity of the research field and the consequent difficulties in conducting research within it.

Before I went to Ghana, I made the bad mistake of preparing myself with the aid of the anthropological literature. Gracia Clark and Polly Hill, the heroines of anthropological research on markets, described well-run markets in Ghana ruled by market queens. The works of both authors provide a picture of markets as well ordered. While Clark refrained from making negative statements about her research, Polly Hill complained about the research situation:

… one can often cannot perceive order in chaos when overwhelmed by the sight of piles of produce in motion – participant observation then becomes an absurd notion. (Hill 1984: 3)

It is not so much the heat, the glare, the bustle, the over-crowding, the noise, the shouting …, or even the sneezing caused by open bags of pepper and maize … – the difficulties are rather the extreme fluidity and complexity of the undocumented situation and the need to trouble

informants at their moment of maximum anxiety, when they are concluding transactions. (Hill 1963: 444)

That did not sound too appealing. But in addition, there were the other forms of media like TV documentaries and scholars that told me about markets in Africa and conveyed a very positive picture: funny market women with whom you can chat and haggle happily; happy family businesses; no profit, but solidarity; great, kind and wise market queens; a wonderful tradition; and of course pure vitality. I was a 22-year-old pretty young anthropologist, drunk on anthropological romance. What I thought I could find was an economic system that revealed sustainable patterns of consumption and was not driven by profit. I hoped to find forms of gift exchange in the market, as well as a fair economy, a moral economy, the opposite of the ominous 'western' market. The research, according to Hill, would be exhausting, but worth it to be in such a wonderful place. And then I came to Tamale, where a few market women finally knocked me out of the skies.

A passage from one of my travel reports from 2011 will best describe my overpowering sense of frustration in the first few days:

Everywhere, women, men, young and old people and children with overloaded baskets or plates on their heads, are running through the streets – The delivery bins are blocking the ways – Next door, someone is washing his feet in the corridor, the butcher is cutting a piece of beef in half, a woman is sorting out her tomatoes and throwing the bad ones down the drain in the alley, next to a urinating child – here and there potential buyers are trying to take a look at the goods on the tables – it's just a quarrel – here the latest gossip is given to the best, there someone is offering his jams – in between a few children are crawling. In addition, there are people who simply want to go from A to B. And then there is also a pretty confused white anthropologist who is trying to find out something about the market. It is noisy, so many different noises are penetrating my head, the most diverse odours are mocking my nose, people are crowding around, and again and again I hear 'Seminga, Seminga!'[3]

Thus I realized with horror that the market would not be just a mental challenge. Rather, I first had to cope with it *physically*. Of course, every anthropologist suffers a certain over-stimulation at first. However, the 'difference' in the case of an African market affects all the imaginable senses and is concentrated on a relatively small space. It felt like cluttered differentness. Suddenly I understood Polly Hill: participant observation would not work here.

I was therefore faced with a methodological problem, which frustrated me because I did not know how I could even arrange everything that was overwhelming me so much in my thoughts. After I convinced my host mother Atu that I was able to work hard physically, she treated me just the same as her daughter. At first I did the work that the young girls did, but later, from about 2013 onwards, she let me run her shop in the market alone if no one else was there. I became a permanent family member with the same rights, duties and prohibitions as her biological daughter. Atu and her colleagues in the market are wonderful teachers who agreed to play the ethnographic game: they taught me 'the market' the hard way.

Thus I got up every morning at 4.30, made breakfast, washed the clothes and swept the yard. At first I went with Atu to the market in the mornings, but later she would send me ahead to get the store ready. I found myself in the market every day between 9 and 10 o'clock, opening the shop. Tables were placed outside, heavy soapboxes dragged from the stock, everything was built up nicely. Not to forget the checkout, an old tin can, which was filled with money. And then the trade began. In the first two years I was an attraction, because not many whites find themselves in the Central Market, yet here now sat a white trader. After 2013 the traders got used to seeing me in the market and greeted me with 'Hey, little market Seminga, welcome back! Gimme some key soap'. Atu sometimes left me alone for a whole day because she trusted and respected me. So I was not an anthropologist armed with a notepad anymore, but the whitest trader Tamale has ever seen. In the evening, after the meal, I wrote down my impressions and the conversations I had had while trading, later having them checked by the individuals involved. This resulted in exciting conversations, with the dealers reflecting on themselves, discussing things among themselves, supplementing my

texts and thus becoming, in a sense, anthropologists themselves. I became their research object, while my research and they themselves became their research objects.

Thus I became a trader and a part of the market, to a certain extent. My research influenced the traders' own thinking about their practices. This sounds kind of heroic, but it is not: although anthropology is an academic discipline, our research is never like those of other 'scientists', as we influence our research field in a far from insignificant way. The reason for this is that the only research instrument we have is our own selves. Researchers and their interactions with the people they research are themselves the instruments they use to generate 'valid data'. So, of course, there cannot be any pure objectivity or research under 'laboratory conditions' to obtain repeatable results. Thus we need to ask ourselves if we do actually do scientific or academic research in the strict sense of the term.

Later I will describe the market as a lifeworld,[4] but this is not just a descriptive term for a social framework but also a methodological term. Following Edmund Husserl's philosophy of phenomenology, the only reason we can *know* and *experience* anything is the 'shared lifeworld' (Husserl 2008: 147). The point here is that being not objective but subjective and acting inter-subjectively is much more effective for anthropological research, as we can become a part of the foreign lifeworld and argue from an inner perspective. But an inner perspective is never clearly objective. Translated into practice, this means that we should not try to formalize or objectify fieldwork just because we are a part of academia. However, another idea of Husserl's is also important here: the experience of the body and the body as an experiencing tool (Husserl 2008). Anthropological research is not (or should not be) just a mainly mental process. If you do what the local people are doing, you can experience what they do and will therefore gain a better understanding of their lives. And through doing what they do, you become a part of their lifeworld. Or better: *their* (foreign) lifeworld becomes a *shared* part of your own.

There are different reasons for adopting a phenomenological approach to anthropological fieldwork. First, by doing the same work as the persons one is researching, one will acquire totally different questions because of a

different context, one that is physical or bodily. Secondly, while being part of a shared lifeworld, one does not need to argue from a totally strange point of view, as one is able to comprehend the living conditions of others. Of course this minimizes the objectivity, but it maximizes the intersubjective point of view and is, in my view, a much more transparent way of describing a research field when you do not hide the fact that anthropology is never objective in a narrowly scientific way. Thirdly, by doing 'hard physical work', one can win the respect of the persons one is researching and stop being the 'strange white academic'. For my research in the market, this was crucial. Lastly, in a field like a market or another workplace, it is important not to disturb the people you want to work with. It is by doing the work oneself that one stops being a disturbing factor and can even become helpful.

The not so ominous Tamale Central Market

African markets are often said to be 'local' markets, trading places not yet infected with globalization and commercialization. As described above, I thought of finding the anthropologist's dream of a market: local, moral, 'gifty', quite the opposite to our 'western' economy. But actually I found something much better: a market, an economy between the markets.

The Central Market in Tamale (Fig. 10.2) is a lifeworld, a vast international network, but based mainly on personal relationships. It is like a melting pot of the various social components of society and a place of individual and collective actions. A look at a map of Tamale shows that the market is the centre of the town. All streets cross here, and every part of social life crosses here and becomes a network.

The market is a political space in which not only is great policy discussed, but various political sectors have a large impact. This is about tenants whose statuses are raised or lowered, depending on whether the current mayor is a friend or opponent of the market. It is about which of the Dagomba chiefs carries out the next market ritual or supports the dealers in the government. It is about the decisions of the assembly, which have a lasting effect on the market. But the market itself also has a political structure. The Hajias are the leaders of the market, with other storekeepers

coming right after them in the market hierarchy. Petty traders, depending on their age and success, share the space in the middle of this pyramid with ‘helpers’, mostly working children and child labourers.



Fig. 10.2: The Central Market (photo by the author, 2014).

Kinship bonds are maintained and closed in the market, also govern kinship structures of the Dagomba royal house are part of the market. Most traders are somehow related – kinship is also something negotiated. And the market is also a religious place. Everywhere in the market, tiny mosques are hidden between the shops. The rhythm of the market depends on the time of prayer. The welfare of the market is not pushed directly on to the responsibility of Allah, but on to the cleverness and robustness of the trader, as expressed in the saying *God made me strong today*. The organization of the market is closely related to religion. The unofficial but nonetheless definitely ruling heads of the market are the Hajias, women who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca. The Imams of the great mosques can speak for the traders in crisis situations in the Assembly. So many things in the market involve underlying processes of constant negotiation, but religion is

somewhat different. You do not negotiate over religion, but its interpretation is consciously and subconsciously negotiated between the generations.

The market is also a place of innovation. Business practices are constantly being rethought and adapted to external influences. The traders are always reinventing themselves. Courageous traders buy new products not only in southern cities like Accra or Kumasi, but also in Indonesia or Saudi Arabia, demonstrating their value with all the necessary tricks in the Tamale market. A Hajia taking off her headscarf and putting on a violet wig, smiling, is a trifle. The dealers are consumption experts who are constantly adapting themselves.

Of course, the market is also a place of tradition. There are rules that always remain constant, even if the outer frame changes. For example, the seniority principle is virtually unchangeable. Also, certain products, such as key soap or brewing cubes, are always in stock. While they are not traditional products in the strict sense, they are among the *latest traditions*, as the traders say. The traditions of the Dagomba are also interwoven with the market. The market itself is an imaginary *buga,* a shrine for the trade, but it includes a small *buga* in the form of a tree, which in turn is intended for the market itself.

The market is a place of depression in its twofold meaning. The traders rarely have high profits, but have to deal with a minimum. There is poverty, and a very few cases end in insolvency. The market flourishes, but rarely earns high profits. If a foreign trader (e.g. an Ashanti or Hausa) is too ill to run his business himself and has no large family in Tamale, he might as well close his business. There is no insurance, and always a high degree of risk. One's family and other traders are one's insurance. In the market biographies are written, which can be depressing: children, who are traded or given to related or unrelated traders because money is scarce work in the market as petty traders, carrying heavy loads, and are liable to exploitation. Old women who have been rejected in the Upper East or Upper West as witches hire themselves out as petty traders and even sleep in the market along with the street children. The market gives these people the bare minimum of food and shelter, but it rarely offers them a way out of their misery because they lack kinship ties.

Nevertheless, the market is also a place of recovery and education. People who have nothing find a source of income here as a *petty trader* or as a helper to a store-holder. Many finance their school fees from their work in the market. The market offers opportunities to slowly work your way up from a *petty trader* to a successful store-holder or a Hajia. This takes time, but in principle it is open to anyone, and the Hajias earn more, for example, than a teacher. Thus, from a certain perspective, an existence as a trader is quite desirable. Through the market's income-earning opportunities, most traders are able to finance comparatively good schools and, in some cases, even send their children to university. Thus it can be seen that a long generation of traders gradually becomes a group of academics.

The market is a place of communication. Information on the most varied news, whether market-based or more global, spreads like a run-of-the-mill market. The market is not just a place where goods are traded and bought. You meet your friends and relatives there, many of whom are active in the market as well. Market children are sent as messengers, and befriended petty traders share with other dealers, for example, if a lane is blocked in the market because of a storm or the like, and you need to take a different path. The younger traders take photographs of themselves in their mother's or father's shop and distribute them among themselves or put them on social networks like Facebook. There, the comments often concern not only the person depicted, but also the place.

I could divide or describe the market under many different aspects, but any such description would be almost endless. As a result, it does not seem useful to suggest what the market *is* ultimately. It seems more reasonable to speak in terms of a momentary picture of a vital life-world, even though there are certain constants in it.

The traders

The best way of describing the processes in the market is by dividing its traders into groups and studying the interactions among them. Thus there are 'travelling salesmen or saleswomen', wholesalers outside the market, Hajias and other shopkeepers, petty traders, child labourers and helpers.

Travelling salesman or saleswomen are autonomous distributors who transport goods for sale between different markets, sometimes across state borders. They might be called intermediaries, but that is not quite accurate because they also transport ideas: they search for new products they can sell to dealers, but they are also looking for new ideas to trade. One of my favourite market mothers brought hair tufts to wear under the headscarf from Saudi Arabia to Tamale; today she has them delivered from Indonesia. Travelling traders are not a fixed category, as there is no such thing in Ghana. Nevertheless, these travelling traders are the motors of innovation and provide the links between markets all over the world.

Distributors in the Industrial Area obtain their goods from Accra, which may come from anywhere in the world (mainly Asia) by sea to Ghana. These traders have halls where the corresponding products (e.g. soaps, diapers, ketchup, baked beans, clothes, cleaning agents, etc.) are stored and resold to the market traders. The traders visit them in the Industrial Area, looking for special products which are then delivered to the market.

The heads of the market are the Hajias. ‘Hajia’ means nothing but ‘stranger’, but it is an honorary title in Ghana. These women are highly respected in north Ghanaian society and very influential because of their social status: 80% of storekeepers in the Central Market are Hajias. They have the highest capital, the most experience and the greatest respect. They are the heads of the market and their families, although they are not elected. The shopkeepers receive their goods, according to what they sell, whether from the Industrial Area, from traveling traders or from farmers. Some of them are traveling traders themselves. The Hajias sell their goods to both ordinary consumers and petty traders.

Often found working in the shops are those I call ‘helpers’, which is what they are also called by the Hajias, and they describe themselves as someone who helps out in the store. However, in a sense the term is wrong. Helpers are the children or other much younger relatives of the Hajias and do most of the work in the shops, including the selling and picking up goods from stock. The Hajias often just monitor the business, even though they are in the market every day. Often, the helpers come from the surrounding villages to the city to study or to earn the money to do so. They

work for the Hajias, who can provide them with financial opportunities. In Tamale there is an unconditional principle of seniority, and in addition many of the storekeepers are highly respected Hajias. This means that these helpers can only attend university or other educational institutions when the Hajias allow them to do so. And that can go on for years. Thus strictly speaking the helpers do not help, but work until someone else decides that they should stop. You never contradict a Hajia or show her a lack of respect. You do what she says and hope that she will finance your hoped-for education. In most cases this happens after a while, but there is a very strong one-sided sense of dependence.

Petty traders are mobile retailers who have no fixed stores. They sell small quantities of goods in the market and on the city streets. They obtain their products from shopkeepers or produce them themselves. Often 'helpers' or child traders are also sent through the streets by the Hajias to sell goods, but they also might be occasional traders or people who just want to earn something or save capital for their own store step by step.

At least 30% of all traders in the market are working children. Often they are distant relatives of the Hajias, or in a few cases strangers bought from traffickers. They do all the work that has to be done and have practically no rights over themselves, though in many cases they are financed by the Hajias. They have to work physically hard and don't have many rights left, and from one point of view are bound in a form of modern slavery (Marschelke 2015), but nevertheless this life offers them more chances than it would do without the Hajias.

No 'trader group' can stand alone if it wants to succeed in the market. They all work hand in hand and are interdependent. So-called economic informality basically means little freedom – despite the fact that they are all self-employed (Hart 1973) – and instead dependence on other traders in a social network. The partial autonomy and thus the positive economic influence of the 'local markets' are conditioned by a strong social network, which necessarily includes interdependence, as the family and other traders are the only insurance the traders have.

Visible hands with strategies

Although solidarity and social ties are essential in the market and play an important role in the account that follows, I must confess that I found neither gift exchange nor a non-capitalist economy, and certainly no fair economy. I found trading strategies that arose out of a close social context but that also stabilized a whole currency. The trader's first concern is to keep the cash flow going so that they have an everyday income.

The important thing in the trade in Tamale is continuity. Only if you can ensure this can you try and make profit. This does not mean that you are not profitorientated – quite the contrary – but continuity comes first. The market in Tamale can aptly be described as a moral economy as James Carrier defined the term (Carrier 1995), but not only in a positive sense. On the one hand, the following strategies work because of the close social cohesion that prevails. On the other hand, this also blocks innovation from outside and excludes foreign actors. In fact, this moral economy is not truly moral, but necessary. The traders are each other's only insurance. People in Ghana are no more moral than we are, but they are necessarily dependent on one another because neither their government nor their economy provides them with security.

Only 34.6% of the Ghanaian population over the age of sixteen deposit their money in a bank. For comparison, in the USA the corresponding figure is 93.6% and in Germany 98.8% (Global Findex 2017). People do not trust the banks because they are associated with the Ghanaian government, as are all 'formal' institutions. The distrust in the government lies in the history of the country, in which the traders have repeatedly become the government's scapegoats. As a result, the dealers create their own conditions. Since the market works exclusively with cash and the dealers have their own efficient credit system, they do not need the banks. According to the Ghanaian government, 83.4% of the population is active in the so-called private informal sector (Government of Ghana 2017), in the network of the markets, which work exclusively with cash – with so-called *Market Money* (Fig. 10.3).



Fig. 10.3: A new 2 Cedi note and some notes that are Market Money (photo by the author, 2013).

Market Money are torn, dirty and crumpled Cedi notes that are associated with the markets due to their appearance and are not accepted in a large number of formal transactions because they are less valued. I have tested this myself. In a shopping mall in Accra, *Market Money* was not even accepted when I offered 10 Cedi more in exchange for the outlet accepting the dirty notes. *Market Money is* the Cedi, it has the same purchasing power, but it is seen as inferior because it belongs to the markets, and these symbolize tradition, the residue. It is the banks, shopping malls and the like that represent the new modern Ghana in this view. *Market Money* symbolizes the imagined dualism in the minds of the people between the informal formal sectors. However, the distinction between these supposed sectors is false, as they are inextricably linked with and influence each other. On the one hand, *Market Money* is only the Cedi, but given the fact that more than 80% of Ghanaian cash is constantly in circulation in the network of the markets, there is a relatively autonomous parallel economic

circuit of money. Only small amounts of *Market Money* are given to the banks, so that for the most part it is only a medium of exchange, and so it is largely rejected by the financial sector. Cash does not become a virtual number in an account, but remains active in exchange, in the real economy.

Market Money symbolizes the dualistic view people have. This view, an aversion towards and mistrust of the government, requires the following trading strategies that are the reasons for the stabilizing effect of 'local' markets. Banks are of little use to traders, who have their own credit system. The first strategy is Susu. Susu is a credit-free system, which is mostly free of interest and is practiced in many different ways (Bortei-Doku and Ayreetey 1996). In the Central Market in Tamale it works as follows. Over an agreed period each member (almost exclusively women) pays a certain amount to the Susu Mother who collects all the money thus deposited. In the first period, whose length has been agreed previously, person A is paid the entire pot. In the second week the same amount is paid in by everyone, and person B receives the corresponding pay-out, etc. In a Susu I was allowed to join, 22 women paid 40 Cedi per week, and so every person had 880 Cedis after the Susu. The Susu has decisive advantages over the banks: it allows transparency, security and control, because it is only carried out with trusted persons, who all agree the conditions between them beforehand. In addition, the money invested in the economy is not withdrawn, but reused. Any amount paid will be used immediately by someone else. The money does not stand still. It is not hoarded as a virtual number, so it remains in circulation. *Market Money* is almost always invested in the real economy. This means that the Cedi has a higher rate of circulation than, for example, the euro or the dollar. And an increased rate of circulation has the same effect as a larger amount of money. For the real economy there is no difference if you spend two dollars or if one dollar is spent twice. As a result, the economy heats up.

The second strategy is internal price regulation. Susu is perfectly adapted to the needs of the market, and the traders are masters in adapting to their world. They also adjust prices within the market so that they are always below those of the supermarkets and remain competitive. They make less profit during these times, but their business continues, and since

they themselves buy almost exclusively in the market, it is offset. These price regulations are discussed among the traders and are usually a reaction to inflation. As products become more expensive, traders are conscious of the fact that the market is undercutting other businesses. Because most people in Ghana must watch their money, they go to the market.

This form of money management has a stabilizing effect on the entire Ghanaian economy, because the network of markets is able to work without state regulation when it has to. Analogous to James Scott's 'high modernist ideology', the Ghanaian state is constantly interested in controlling, regulating and modernizing (Scott 1998). The negative consequences of this are compensated for by the traders' dealings with money. One of the negative consequences of the global financial system is that money is constantly being generated artificially, which it leads to it being hoarded and used to speculate with, instead of being invested. Silvio Gesell, a German economist of the late nineteenth century, recognized this problem and therefore designed the concept of 'free money', which, as it loses its value, is spent as quickly as possible, so it has to be invested to allow the economy to continue to run (Gesell 1949). It is demurrage money. There are several examples in Europe where his ideas concerning 'free-money' have been proved right. The most popular was in Wörgl, an Austrian village which found itself facing several economic problems during the years 1932 and 1933. After adopting 'free money', the economy recovered. Today this is known as the 'miracle of Wörgl' (Uchatius 2010; Sademach 2012). Several villages and even regions now use 'free money' as a second currency, and it has been shown that these communities improved their local economies as a result (Sademach 2012). Unfortunately, Gesell's work has never been translated into English.

Market Money is not exactly like 'free money', but it can be called social demurrage. It is used almost exclusively in the network of the market, is spent more quickly and is always invested, which is where it benefits most people in the real economy. Thus there is always liquidity. You may have lower profits, but you never go bankrupt. The network of markets thus forms an economic and social bail-out fund, one that is not guaranteed by the state. Fluctuations in the financial system cannot disrupt

the Ghanaian economy, as is the case in our economies, because of the traders and their *Market Money*. The network of markets is tied to the global financial system, but traders are flexible in responding to the needs of their market by physically constraining the given structures. Of course the profit margins are much lower than in other economies, but the network of markets stabilizes the economy and offers sources of both income and goods, enabling even the state to enrich itself from the surplus product.

'The market' and its dualisms

With regard to 'the market', 'the economic system' is often said to be something evil. As a result, Adam Smith's idea of the invisible hand is often misinterpreted as an ominous force driving the economy forward. Smith was thinking of supply and demand, based on the profit motives of individuals. Thanks to Karl Polanyi and other colleagues, anthropologists especially like to criticize the capitalist profit motive. However, Smith was primarily a moral philosopher and was confident that this profit motive would also profit the community. For him, therefore, the profit motive of individuals *is* the *Wealth of Nations* (Smith 2007). At the beginning of my research, being a typical anthropological romanticist, I hoped to find a business that is not regulated by an invisible hand. And indeed found something else: many very visible hands, namely the traders of the many markets that do not submit to the requirements of the global economic system, but act in the interests of their networks. However, these visible hands are driven by Smith's invisible hand: you want to make profit in order to feed your family and to be able to live a good life. Money is subject to social regulation, but simultaneously it has a measurable economic value. However, the two values are mutually dependent on *each other* and have equally significant economic and social effects. In order to describe the actual situation, it helps not to emphasize just the social aspects of money or economically measurable values. As the example of Tamale shows, *both* value ascriptions are necessary if you want to understand the economy.

Consequently, it does not make sense to demonize money or 'the market' as something purely anonymizing. Depending on who is using money and how, it has the power to put people in the background and

become something impersonal, ominous, an aspect of the demonized invisible hand. But money has also the potential to connect people, especially in its electronic form. And, as the example of *Market Money* shows, a currency is not necessarily only driven by the state, the financial sector or anything else that is impersonal: it can be regulated by local actors, by individuals like you and me. A purely governmental, purely economic or purely social regulation of the economy or money does not exist. Every institution is controlled by people. As a result, it is not reasonable, as part of a critique of capitalism – and this is quite symptomatic of anthropology –to demonize money on the one hand as economically impersonal and on the other hand to romanticize it as a purely social phenomenon in rural societies, as Polanyi did (Polanyi 2014). This sort of thinking creates a dualism, for which there is no compelling reason. Even Marcel Mauss, in his famous footnote about money in *The Gift*, complained that definitions of money are often of 'arbitrary limit' (Mauss 1990: 57). What should money and all other parts of economy be but a controlled human social dimension as well? One could even say that these parts form a 'total social phenomenon' (Hénaff 2009: 449). Money and the economy are not disembedded from society, as Polanyi argued for nineteenth-century England (Polanyi 2014: 88–89), but are subject to the actions of people.

The market in Tamale is neither capitalistic, nor non-capitalistic, neither moral nor impersonal. The traders are self-employed profit-oriented actors who are not controlled by the state – this being pretty much the definition of capitalism. But they practice Susu, and depend on and trust in each other. There is almost no competition between the traders, which again does not sound at all capitalistic.

Also, the traders take care of one another, as they provide mutual insurance. They know each other and often know their customers, fitting the idea of Carrier's moral economy (1995). The reciprocity between the actors enables them to practice Susu and follow internal price regulations. Also, continuity is more important than profit, which also sounds 'moral'. But do child abuse and child labour sound moral? Actually, the low profits are

subsidized by unpaid labour. So the market in Tamale is a moral economy, though without being very 'moral'.

Looking at the way money connects the two supposed economic sectors, it does not seem very logical to speak about two sectors. The idea of the informal sector invented by Keith Hart 1973 is misleading: although the traders are self-employed and do not observe the 'formal' regulations, they are influenced by official policy and the financial system. On the other hand, the supposedly formal sector is influenced by local traders. Ghana – and not, I think, any other country – has clearly isolated and defined economic sectors. It has an economy which is driven by individuals with different biographies.

Nor is the distinction between formalism and substantivism and what it says about how to study the economy at all useful. The debate between the two camps has become a debate about epistemological methods: induction versus deduction (Isaac 2012). Induction means that one moves from the particular to the general: one generalizes from one or more individual observations and assumes that they are based on a common principle or law. Deduction, on the other hand, means applying the general to something special: a generally accepted rule is used to refer to an isolated case. While formalists prefer the latter approach, substantivists tend to favour the inductive method, which naturally fits anthropology better. But why did they make this distinction at all? After all, one must first have proceeded inductively even to arrive at a general rule, which can then be applied deductively again. In practice, therefore, the two procedures are always having to complement each other anyway. If I had studied the market only from a substantivist perspective, I would not have understood that the market traders are also profit-driven, and probably I would have described *Market Money* as an exclusively cultural or social phenomenon. On the other hand, if I had used only a formalist perspective, I would not have been able to understand the social ties that link the traders.

These dualisms are misleading when it comes to 'the market', as the example of Tamale shows. Anthropology itself is not free from ideological prejudices: economists are generally blinded, and anthropologists have grasped the understanding of human action for themselves. The traders of

Tamale are not purely profit-oriented, nor are they exclusively shaped by altruistic, social or religious motives. Nor can one argue that the formally organized sectors of the economy are based solely on capitalist actions. Again, the concept of the lifeworld is important here: Ghana's economy, whether it is the market in Tamale, a bank, a supermarket or the stock exchange, is designed by individuals. The lifeworld is not an exclusive term for non-rationalized, or very social forms of economy, as Jürgen Habermas claims (Habermas 1982). In investigating economic practices, it is not advisable to demonize the formally organized sectors of the economy because, thinking that through consistently to the end, the actors involved are seen either as exploiters or as incapacitated by a self-regulating superhuman power. Accordingly, dualisms are absolutely inappropriate for ethnographic description. The dualism between formalist and substantivist perspectives includes the other dualisms mentioned here. Only by combining both is it possible to conduct good fieldwork and to understand markets.

What is 'the market'?

Back to the initial question: what is 'the market', 'a market', 'the markets'? In my brief historical overview in the first part of this chapter, two rough definitions emerged: the market as a place of personal exchange, and the market as an area for growth and impersonal exchange. The central market in Tamale belongs rather to the first, Ghana's financial system to the second. But there is still the money, which exposes both definitions as not quite accurate, but also as not entirely wrong either, since money connects the markets. And it does so because individuals control it. I can say with certainty that the market in Tamale is a life-world. But the Ghanaian stock exchange is also a life-world. And as the two worlds are connected by money, what is the main difference? Both are an external reality for each other, over which they do not have much influence. The bankers or businessmen cannot control the Tamale market any more than the market woman can control the stock exchange or the central bank. Yet they influence each other, with the subtle difference that market women do not go bankrupt just because a few people in high positions have made some

wrong choices. These market traders provide financial security within their social network and in their handling of money, so that the economy does not succumb to total collapse.

So, what is 'the market'? My host mother Atu said: 'The market is our everyday food', and her sister Adamu noted: 'The market is my home.' How might the bankers respond to this question? A broker in the Ghanaian stock market said: 'The market is finance.' I personally think Xenophon's description fits all forms of the market, as it is the place where the greatest numbers of people come together. After all, you do not necessarily have to meet personally to exchange goods or values in any manner. As a consequence, there is only one answer to the question about what is the best definition of 'the market', and that is an unsatisfactory one: it depends on whom you ask. The Tamale central market is in any case, like so many markets, a market between the markets.

Notes

1. Although Polanyi's substantivism could never fit the universalistic claims of Marxism, there are many overlaps between these two thinkers' ideas. Actually Polanyi's first idea, of 'The great transformation', developed during the 1930s, when he was in Vienna inspired by the Vienna School of Carl Menger and Friedrich Hayek. Although Polanyi was not a clear Marxist, he was definitely influenced by Marxist ideology (Halperin 1984; Isaac 2012).
2. One Euro is worth about 5 Cedi (GHC) (2017).
3. 'Seminga' is a Dagbon term for 'stranger, white person'.
4. The literal translation of 'Lebenswelt' as 'lifeworld' is somewhat insufficient, as the German word stands for a quite complex philosophical concept. Nevertheless, in line with the practice of Hans Peter Hahn, Michael Jackson and other anthropologists, I will retain this translation here.

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Chapter 11

The walking cartographies of the marketplaces of Surat

Nishpriha Thakur

The constant correction of the map, theoretically possible in the case of a suspended map, is in this case impossible: the alterations of the territory could not be perceived through the opacity of the map. Thus the observer would make inferences about an unknown territory from an unfaithful map. If finally, the map must include the inhabitants as well, it would for this same reason prove once again unfaithful as it would represent an empire inhabited by subjects who, in reality, inhabit the map. (Umberto Eco, *On the Impossibility of Drawing a Map of the Empire on a scale of 1 to 1*)

Introduction

Mapping a cityscape works in various ways – that is, cartographic imaginations form not only along the geographical contours on paper, but also through how a city is viewed and subsequently *absorbed*. Of course, viewing means a gaze that is subjective, whether economic, social, administrative or legal. From being economic nodal points that function as dots in global trading networks (Braudel and Reynolds 1982; Markovits 2008) to nation-state capitals that tie cities' performances to national agendas (Therborn 2017), cities have undergone various transformations. A large number of anthropological surveys, sociological analyses focusing on large time frames, narratives, travelogues etc., have in their own ways documented

multiplicities of cities and shown how they have changed over a period of time. These studies have in some ways focused on how to understand the city better in order to 'govern' it better.

These musings on cities by scholars like Jonathan Raban (1984) delineate the coming together of global city-type people, whether in New York or Highgate, London, and they describe the common characteristics that cities make out of people, or maybe characteristics that people and cities cohabit together. Similarly, the multiple narratives conjoining together to understand Lahore and how its economic centres (mainly bazaars) were disrupted after partition, as well as the cultural shifts and Lahore's separation from Amritsar, have been described by Pran Neville (2007) in his work on the former city. All these renderings require certain perceptions, which may or may not be formed through walks. True, these walks may be commissioned to someone who already *knows* the city or has been allotted the task of understanding and then describing it. The idea of walking could be linked to the physical act of walking, as well as to meandering through a city's files, maps, gazetteers and travelogues, maybe to understand its dark alleys or the spaces that mark the historical shifts within it. In this sense, the 'walkers', 'flâneurs', 'meanderers' and those stimulated by 'wanderlust' – all these characters have had a complex position in describing a city. For example, should one look at *Paris Spleen* by Baudelaire as describing shifting moralities in nineteenth-century Paris, or as subjective ramblings about relations with the social culture in that time frame? In this sense, the relationship between what a walker observes and what he/she writes is complex.

My interest here is in understanding the position of the *flâneur*, especially how much of it represents a purposeless or perhaps a personal desire to fathom and absorb a city as much as a purposeful account of a city that could be archived. Furthermore, I look at how the segregation of spaces in a city that are filled with specific purposes have in a way curbed the purposelessness of walks in a city. This further concretizes the panopticon gaze imbibed by whoever walks in the city. In this context, I look at various spaces in the city of Surat (India), focusing on its market places. The reason I chose market places is because markets are spaces that in a way are shaped

by everyday walks, whether to buy groceries or just to see what has come up as a new and exciting product in the market. These walks to the markets might also mean that there are various other purposes than buying, some spots in markets being coloured with black money, networked groups, secret languages, gossip and much more. Thus, I try to see how these seemingly purposeless, yet purposeful walks have been eliminated through the individualization of spaces, even in everyday life, just in the way that monasteries work (Sloterdijk and Fabricius 2007).

As a city, Surat has had its own ways of forming spaces filled with purposes. Having been an economic nodal point as a port city from medieval times, it has continued to maintain its position as a major centre of the textile and diamond industries in India. From the second quarter of the eighteenth century, Surat became a major industrial centre because of the influx of skilled artisans from Ahmedabad (Chaudhuri 1978: 92).[1] Surat's prominence as a pre-modern urban town relates more to the complementarity of the city being the nodal point in global trade and the socio-political processes that have shaped the dynamics of trade. And as, above the level of peddling, traders and merchants can only operate from fixed locations, the redistributive functions of towns took precedence over the industrial role (*ibid*.: 91). However, the conditions of the artisans themselves have been overlooked, as compared with the attention given to the local traders and entrepreneurs (Streefkerk 1997).

In Surat's case, there has been a general transition in the relations of production from the early twentieth century,[2] for example, from a predominance of 'independent weavers' to different kinds and degrees of dependence, from 'custom to contract' and 'family-based forms of production to the small factory'. Or even, for that matter, there has been a re-categorization of spaces of production – *Karkhana,* a workshop or mill (processing house), was also characterized by the structures and practices it assumed within the family itself (Roy 1993; Haynes 1999). Again, if one looks at the formation of clusters over a period of time, one can see gradual changes in the twentieth century. The formation of a mosaic through an arrangement of separate autonomous clusters perhaps occurs in urban settings, where there are segregations according to caste and its status within

a whole. For example, I. P. Desai sees streets (*sheri, pol, vad, khancho*) as having been formed by the larger subdivisions of a caste in cities in Gujarat.[3] The rigid boundaries of caste perhaps become permeable and fuzzy in the cities because the division of labour can no longer be traced back to the formation of caste on the basis of specific professional specialization the way it is in the villages. Along with becoming fuzzy, how do these boundaries again concretize boundaries of a different kind, namely spaces that *produce* (Lefebvre 1991). I am interested in understanding spaces that are produced through various shifts in the city, for example, an open area where stray animals loiter gradually enters the plan of a city and is transformed into a planned market place. In this way, spaces take on different meanings and subsequently different purposes. My aim is to show how meanderings and walks are perceived in these kinds of spaces.

The walks in Surat

However, I could never walk in Surat, at least not everywhere. That is what the city has been like for a long time, I think. It has been really difficult not to be able to stop and just look at things. I understand people do not talk in cities, but are spaces also muted by their residents? Oh, those concrete roads, do not speak to people in your greyish tongue, do not let those walking detour, but instead keep them focused. You will not find a spot you can talk to, that you can tell your deepest secrets to. What if you trust the different terrains of spaces to keep your secrets rather than different people? You do not have that choice in Surat. When the asphalt is spread across them, the unevenness of the roads of cities is also evened out. They do not receive the vibrations from your unchoreographed walk, they simply dampen it. Like a voice, a language that is received by no ear, not even the non-human one. One might argue that on the same road there are trucks, auto-rickshaws, luxury cars, bicycles and people travelling inside or on them for all purposes, so that the composition is of different kinds of people. There is still a difference, in cities that wipe out the walkers, the *wandersmänner*. The purpose-less, jobless idealists staring at big offices, imagining that the world doesn't understand their ideologies. Those lovers who walk together holding hands when their homes are in faraway places and who count coins and

desires in their lover's eyes before buying a cup of tea or ice creams from small roadside stalls. Those everyday school- and college-goers who live close by in hostels and rented places, rushing off to their classes. A larger group of people near the zebra crossing, compared to the number of vehicles waiting for the red light to turn green. But Surat never offered these sights/sites to me. It was difficult not being able to walk – you straightaway reach the place you wanted to go to. What if you don't know where you want to go?

Things were evened out. Surat has followed that transformation of the urban fact into a concept of a city: like de Certeau's New York (2008), the city turns the production of spaces into a category called 'expenditure'. The planners spend resources on the purposes of the spaces. You know the exact location and the purpose. You knew that, when you step into Ghod-Dod road, you are entering a posh location in which, if you are a teenager, you must have a bike or a car to roam around with. If you are walking, someone will honk very close to you and scare you. You knew that if you went to the inner-city area, you would walk to buy some stuff from the markets – more cheaply, of course. You dare not sit on the pavements or find tea places, as the gaze will make you stand up and start shopping – the purpose a place assigns. And if you find yourself around Varachha-Katargam, then you have some Olympiad kind of exam in some school, and again you dare not try to walk. Women on the ground floor, busy sorting laces and fabrics, would stare at you and, if you are there too long, someone would come and start asking, 'Why are you here?' So it is better you get in the damn rickshaw and go where you want to go.

Confine yourself. To a space. To a cluster. Darker shade evens out the lighter nuances. Especially think about the colours, black and grey. The sooty smoke from the industries growing on the peripheries of Surat covered the colours that Surat was used to, the sound of those small machines, moved outside to form a different kind of noise. So much so, the bling colours of cloth and laces that lie around everywhere these days in the textile market look grey in this darkening city. Along those threads, hunched backs, yellowed eyes, pallid cheekbones, protruding back bones and greyish-yellow shirts, burying the silvery shine of the threads. The gleaming faces of

actresses on hoardings merge somewhere with the homesick migrants carrying tonnes of sarees on their backs and loading it on to the tempos and trucks.



Fig. 11.1: Sonifalia road during one of the walks.

Surat is a city for the purposeful – mere walkers certainly do not have any space. And if you think you can try walking, do so. And see how it will be assigned a purpose. The thing with walkers is that they are not self-contained. They imitate a city, depending on everyone who/that forms them.

Walkers need to sit somewhere, gullibly talking to a passer-by, sipping some roadside tea, smoking a cigarette, curiously investigating nameplates, trespassing in places and then finding a new as well as a sustainable place to eat. They talk of ingredients, family members, recipes, local goons, gossip, and then walk away with an ear to lend and a curious thirst to quench. They have their own repository of memory going on, their own language that enables them to remember the streets without knowing the numbers. But that's the problem. If you are not on your own, bringing your own water bottle, tiffin, your air to breathe, you must manufacture your own, or you will be knocked down by people's gaze – the air is heavy with that piercing gaze. Try standing near Rangeela Park for about half an hour – people will make you uncomfortable. But if someone comes on a bike, or even walking, and joins you, then you order something from Gangor, then it is clear that you have come to eat. And then an extrapolation – you have come for shopping, and therefore you've got to eat. Go near Ambaji in Parle Point, of course, take the Pooja Abhishek road side; on the other side you will be thrown off the road by various cars who have come to purchase jewellery from P. C. Jewellers or from Pachhigar and Sons. If you take the correct side, you will be walking to the Ambaji temple and, yes, you are very religious. So walking is fine on that side. But try walking further from the Experimental School in the same lane, and you will again be subject to various kinds of gaze. And no tea places. No inexpensive food places. Everywhere there are flyovers. You can fly, but never walk. The biggest problem would be then with parks – what, then, are parks designed for if not walking? You are tampering with a city's purposeful map if you are walking the streets without any reason.

Erasmus said that the city is a huge monastery, and yes it is. The only difference is that we are very alone and there is no connection, not even divinity. In a monastery, you live alone with no connections to the outside world, but there is a conversation going on with God in your own chamber. It might seem like a confinement, a small room with no one and the idea of conversing with the invisible. However, I think it is still better than the auto-communicado experience that cities offer these days. And I have Surat particularly in my mind when I say this. You are neither self-dependent, nor

do you realize that you are absolutely dependent. Now, what's with the dependency? This is a mirage kind of situation: your own bed, your own toaster, your own induction, a small bathroom with a commode and your 'personal' everyday relationships with the newspaper guy, maids, vegetable seller, and your own everyday routine of work. This produces an idea that makes you believe you are leading a purposeful life independent of anyone. And the city has such spaces where you go to fulfil various purposes. You are a Khatri, a Ghanchi, and you have a responsibility towards your wife and children to take them by bike or car for a long drive to Piplod, doing absolutely nothing. Piplod eateries are made for that purpose. These purposes are inherently linked with duties. Performances that you must do. And walking stands nowhere. The idle/ideal walker fulfils no duties like these.



Fig. 11.2: A couple in Chauta Bhagal marketplace, chopping vegetables while managing their shop.

And may sanity be bestowed upon you, in case you choose to write a travelogue. First of all, why would you travel to Surat? To write? It must be some report that you have to submit to some organization. Otherwise why would you reach this city by train? Whatever direction you arrive from, north or south, there will be squalor on both sides, multiple bodies working in sweat, metres and metres of cloth travelling everywhere, even entangling your imagination. From the southern side, Udhana station, where there are mills and clusters of migrants on both sides of the railway tracks. From the

northern side, you have Uttaran and then the river Tapi, A. K. road on your left and Sumul dairy on your right. Again, the sound of machines is louder than the sound of water.

There you come, Surat railway station, platform number one, on the first floor, one of its kind. You must have come to consume the production, the sarees, or to be a part of consumption in the making. How could you just come without either of these two purposes? Ovington, you travelled at the right time, observing the moors, the banians and the walks on the streets. Try now. Of course, no one is going to say anything to you. That's against the moral functioning of a city – hear no one, see no one, speak to no one (it has already been assumed that everything is evil). You are evil, well, good or bad for you, no moralities. Perspectives have been turned into prospectives: where you stand and where you will stand. The conversion apparatus of the gaze of the people is always at work. But wait, you too had a purpose. Narrating about the inhabitants. You didn't come to walk. What separates the walker and Ovington is the belongingness. Not to the space or the city, but to walking itself (Ovington 1994).

In Italy, you have small spaces called *passeggiata*, also a reference to the idea of walking itself. You sit with fellow walkers in a canopy-like area, and there is a small amount of time factored into your day where there is no purpose. The lampposts are being cribbed about. A little bit of nudging, and you know all the gossip about the areas around. People sometimes share not just to spread but to get rid of spreading of words inside their own bodies. Words can be heavy – they are like cotton balls, and the longer they stay in our water-contained bodies, the heavier they become. They need to be breathed out, either through voices or blank gazes, so that they are carried in the air, lighter again, floating on their own. And there is no other reason, no other purpose. A walker knows this. And that is why a map is not a territory, perhaps. A walker hardly remembers his own address through names and numbers, so how will he remember whose son is a thief in which street? He will simply share that piece of sweet you've brought with you, listen to you, diluting the words on the surface of his body, and that's all. He is not a gossip-monger because he never trades in gossip. A monger is the one who is

a trader. However, the walker wants to walk, discarding words so as to keep his body lighter.

In Surat, there were spaces where people met, at least for evening teas and morning visits to temples or mosques. Even when there was no walking involved, there was a ritual – on the *ordaa*, the porch, the front of a shop. Men and women, creating their own spaces, laughed and sipped teas. They still do, but it is not so common and not so frequent. Those porches have been replaced by high-value shops proliferating from the Salabatpura side and lures from flats and bungalows in Adajan areas. Till the late 1990s and early 2000s, there were pluralities of spaces. For example, at Athwagate you could find multiple kinds of restaurant – Branto, Richie Rich, Mysore Café, Dominos, Mahesh Paubhaji, Classic Restaurant, Kailash Sweets – almost all of them still there, but the variation in their prices has been reduced. Anywhere you go among these places, things will be priced similarly.

That is how you even out, or, if one accepts it as a course of change, then that is how it is evened out. The abstraction remains; you have come to eat out, and that's all, the next important factor being that you have come to eat out at Athwagate. Minor details like why have you come, are you simply hungry and that you forgot to take your meal, or are you sneaking away from your parents and just eating with friends? These are abstracted – you find that the place has already assigned you a class and hence a purpose. Similarly, when you come to the Udhana Darwaja and Khatodara area, you find buildings stacked with offices – DHL, Bluedart, financial services – and amidst these, you'll find restaurants like Taste of India and Deewan-e-Khaas. These days, you also have Sugar and Spice. These are client-based spaces – the owner brings employees or partners to dine out and then discuss.

In the textile market area, you have small restaurants close to Sahara Darwaja. These are always on some offer basis. Pay a hundred rupees and eat as much as you like from the menu fixed for that particular day. Small-scale workers and traders go there, like an eating out space. And then there are many mushrooming tea stalls where you find infinitesimally small (at least for tea) cups where workers take multiple breaks. But these spaces are *possessed*. It is as if the people around about have created small clusters where a stranger, a walker, is not allowed in. The inhabitants of that marked

cluster – not just administratively, but also through social gaze – sometimes walk around, purposefully or, dare I say, purposelessly. They claim those spaces. And this possession lingers everywhere. It is as if the documented plan performs itself through the gaze of people. There should be a small vegetable market in the ward, a public park, a school and residential norms including the width of the roads. Should there be a space to walk, not for the purposeful pavement walkers, but the idlers and the listeners of the city? One doesn't know yet, especially of its purpose. The small clusters form macro-spaces, and should you walk from one to another, you are transgressing. Stay inside your house, the one assigned to you by the city and the one you have assigned to yourself when you entered this city – co-habit them, you and your walks. Surat is definitely not the inhabitable city.

Walking in the textile market of Surat

On the one hand, Surat has had a proliferating textile market that links the city with various other cities in the country, while on the other hand, there are local market places that function in everyday lives. There are organic market places that emerged over a period of time, mainly in the inner city area of Surat. Planned shopping complexes have sprung up since the Surat Urban Development Authorities started working on planning the city in the late 1980s, and then there is the main Surat textile market, built in 1977, but planned much more concretely in the late 1990s as part of the Surat Inner City Revitalization Plan.

All three kinds of markets have created unwalkable spaces in their own ways. In the present textile market, since the spaces for production inside the houses are no longer there, the fine boundaries between house and profession have been erased. The genesis of work and everyday life has been shaped through the engagement with handloom machines in early twentieth century, and then later on powerloom machines. For example, as Haynes says about the handloom machines in the early twentieth century:

In the artisan household, all the work connected to the manufacture of textiles was generally done in and around the home, which functioned as both living quarters and workplace. Weaving families generally owned their

own modest houses, their looms and their other tools, though frequently these served as security against debts to moneylenders. Usually the loom itself occupied a central place on the ground floor near the entry way of the home. (Haynes, 1991: 14)

Presently, the textile market does not have women in the everyday who work – instead the space is dominated by its prominent male presence and their gaze.

In November 2013, I walked in the textile market areas for fieldwork. Below is my ethnographic account:

It was a dingy locality, much to my amazement that such a place existed in Surat. There were threads of all colours lying on the roads, with no clue to their origins. Some threads turned darker when they were in the centre of the road. A lot of people were trampling on these threads; some moved their hands to their feet to remove the entangled ones, just like a ritual. They moved in a similar pace, though with different agendas. One had huge cardboard sheets, cut in shapes that would make boxes to put the sarees, while some had those huge stacks of yarn-unloaded from the auto-rickshaws. There were a lot of people enjoying those short breaks once in a while. At the *Chana Masala* vendor, some chewing *vimal pan masala* and some loathing as if they had all the time in the world. Most of them were young, in their teens or early twenties – at least that's what I calculated from their faces.

This is the small street that passes through the textile markets (Millenium Market, Rathi Market, Apex Towers, Rathi textile market, etc.). The term 'textile market' refers to the cluster of various towers that are there in the Ring Road stretch in Surat. It starts roughly after the shopping complex at Maan Darwaja ends and stretches till the Sahara Darwaja.

One can say that, once the flyover bridge starts close to the Singapuri wadi, on Ring Road, you can feel flavours of the various textile markets. Huge hoarding boards with actresses displaying the sarees, some even displaying the movies in which the sarees appeared. Under the flyover bridge, one can see many vehicles unloading sarees and grey yarn. People moving in a perfect labyrinth, created by the chaos on the road.

Millennium textile market is the one of the largest textile markets in India. It is a huge complex, with many shops. These shops are usually shops for wholesale of sarees. They do not give it in retail; however, there are some shops that do sell in retail. May be one or two of the hundreds would do that, and they are eyed scornfully by other shopkeepers because of breaking the usual norm. The shops have colourful sarees on display. When we observe the exchange between a shopkeeper and a customer, we get the feeling that they have known each other for a longer period. The shopkeeper doesn't have to appease the customer; he seems to be faithful to the shop, buying hundreds of sarees every week. There is a feeling of agreement that circles when we see the shopkeeper and the customer shaking hands and then giving a shoulder to shoulder hug.

There is a narrow street that starts from the left of the Millennium textile market, it borders the Begumpura region, where mostly the textile workers of the lower social class live. The street culminates into various other textile markets in the vicinity. It is this street that I had talked about in the beginning. The market had a lot of young men engaged in the various activities of the textile market. Everyone's postures were different. One was bending to repair a small cycle that had a lump of cloth in its chains, one was sitting so as to roll the laces for the sarees, one was sitting on a narrow wall that could barely support the hunch of human beings, but he was moving his legs in some kind of music.

They looked at me in an unnerving manner, with those sharp eyes questioning you. It had a very 'male' effect. I was scrutinized in a very different way. As if my movements were tracked, the way I walked, the pace of my hands with my legs. The curiosity in my eyes was responded to by their curiosity. I was a little hesitant to talk to them and clear my doubts. There were lewd remarks and songs that people dedicated to me. Some hesitated, but I knew they had those songs on their lips. There were hardly any females in the area around. Some were there, who looked sturdy enough to withstand the gaze of these men and the rough weather coupled with smoke from the areas around. I could see craters filled with milk pouches, so I asked one of them why they had so many milk pouches in this heat, the milk might spoil. He replied saying that there are a lot of *Marvari* shops that

require milk all throughout the day so as to supply tea to their customers. There were small set-ups in each market that made tea and supplied it to the shops.

It was a small world where I could see almost everything. A small dingy toilet, scribbled with random mobile numbers and love songs. There was a cobbler at the end of the street, small eateries, with the offers like eat as much as you like and pay only 50 rupees for that. There was stench as well as fragrance of grams and other spicy snacks. I could not differentiate between them. There was a strange blend of everything. All kinds of people, all kinds of cars, all kinds of places. It cannot be classified as a place that is under-developed, neither can you say that it is a sophisticated place.

The moment I entered one of the textile markets, I saw a silence that surrounded the place. There were two men, decorating a saree with a lace, and the guard asked where I would like to go. The shops had the smell of synthetic dyes and new clothes. There were binaries that existed together, hustle-bustle outside, and the moment you cross a barrier, you see a steep silence. It was afternoon, so I could see many people taking a nap in their respective shops. The shops were very neat,;we were supposed to take off our footwear and then enter. It had a neat mattress with white bed cover and pillows for the arm rest. The sarees were neatly stacked in the display drawers. I could see a lot of men neatly fulfilling their assigned duties like folding the sarees that were there on the mattress (they were probably shown to the customers that had come to see the latest stock), a young man bringing tea in small craters, either in small porcelain cups or in small steel cups (smaller than the size of an average index finger); a man was neatly tucking the bed covers that were displaced because of the customers. People were talking in numbers, and their language included lot of slang.

The walks in this market could never be purposeless. However, I sometimes walk, transgressing, by simply assigning purposes and stories to places I rarely go to and to people I rarely interact with.

And perhaps that is how you walk, and that is how you belong to an unwalkable city.

Notes

1. As even Garrett Menning notes about the early twentieth century in his dissertation, 'The district collector reported in 1910 that at least 3000 skilled artisans had been drawn to Surat from Benaras by the city's more vigorous economy' (Menning, 1996: 101).
2. Surat saw its first steam driven spinning and weaving mills round 1890 (Streefkerk 1997).
3. See Shah and Desai (1988).

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Chapter 12

Direct sales in the Amazon: Precariously mediating regimes of value

Jessica Chelekis

Introduction

One of the most pervasive and transformative trends in the global economy has been the retail revolution, characterized by the growth of large-scale retailers throughout the twentieth century. Retailers have experienced an increasing ability to dictate to both consumer and supplier markets, deciding where manufacturers should be located, what they should produce and at what price (Hamilton *et al.* 2011). This in turn has produced new kinds of consumers, as 'the global convergence toward certain types of retail markets, product worlds, and expectations of choice … promise a new way of life for people who come to see themselves in a new light' (*ibid*.: 6). Avon and other multinational direct sales companies, most notably the popular Brazilian beauty brand Natura, are immensely popular in small Amazonian towns. These companies produce beauty and personal care products and distribute them through a network of sales representatives around the globe. Their products are ubiquitous even in remote communities, where residents primarily meet household consumption needs through subsistence agro-forestry.

Marissa is the Avon coordinator in the small town of Ponta de Pedras, located on Marajó Island in the estuary of the Lower Amazon. On the days that an Avon shipment arrives, Marissa's house is bustling with activity. She supervises the unloading of the boxes, which then have to be counted and re-

counted to ensure that the correct number have been delivered. A van delivers the boxes to her house on the short drive from the municipal docks. The product shipment originates from one of the distribution centres located in north-eastern Brazil, is delivered to the city of Belém, in the state of Pará, by truck, and is then loaded on a boat to make the four-hour journey up the Marajó-Açu River to Ponta de Pedras.

Avon representatives hang out on the porch and around the house, waiting to receive their products. The representatives from the river communities have to plan their transportation into town so that they arrive in time to get their orders and are able to catch a motorboat to go back home again. Sometimes the shipment is late, as much as a day or two behind schedule. When this happens, representatives who have journeyed into town from the interior go home empty-handed and have to return another day. Because of the difficulties involved in getting into town and the uncertainty over the exact timing of product deliveries, Marissa often tells representatives that the products will be arriving a day or two after the official date given by her manager.

On the surface, the availability of mass-produced beauty products in Ponta de Pedras can be viewed as an example of the global market increasing its reach into a peripheral world region. Through globalization processes, large corporations pursue the vertical integration of market channels in order to increase their reach into previously untapped markets, often into developing and underdeveloped regions. Dannhaeuser (1996), for example, examines the material, physical impact of the pursuit of economic growth and vertical integration on local contexts in developing regions. Thus relatively new retail environments, such as franchise stores, shopping malls and up-market boutiques, appear in places previously dominated by small-scale vendors and family-run shops (Dannhaeuser 1996). The increasing trade concentration and vertical integration do not simply replace local retailers, they also have enormous consequences for the market landscape (Applbaum 2012).

Although brick-and-mortar retail outlets remain difficult to access for Amazonian residents, the direct sales distribution model is an effective way for global companies to reach difficult-to-access consumers. However, the

local context and history of underdevelopment in this region shapes and limits the degree to which global companies are integrated into local market relationships. For example, the underdeveloped transport infrastructure, illustrated in the vignette above, results in shipments arriving late and a distinct lack of communication between the local coordinator and Avon's company management. More serious than the impact of infrastructure, however, are the constraints of the local economy itself. The dominance of the informal economy, and especially informal credit, creates a discrepancy between on the one hand the value of the products and the level of compensation for working as a direct sales representative in the local context, and on the other hand product prices and the remuneration for representatives set by companies nationally.

The result of this discrepancy is that many women working as direct sales representatives often only manage to break even or lose money and fall into debt. Locally, direct sales work offers value to representatives beyond a supplemental income; and while some customers are willing to dedicate a high proportion of their income to purchasing direct sales products, others are only reluctant customers, burdened by social obligations to buy products from relatives or friends. While Dannhaeuser (1996), Hamilton *et al.* (2011) and others are certainly correct in pointing out the transformative effects of the retail revolution and global vertical integration, this chapter examines how the socio-material characteristics of places affect and transform the local value of retail services and mass-produced consumer goods, removing them from the control of the global companies that distribute them.

Regimes of value: Understanding conflicting logics and integrations

Appadurai's (1989) notion of regimes of value provides an analytical perspective with which the complexities of the uneasy articulation between global manufacturers of consumer goods and the particularities of market mechanics in underdeveloped contexts can be unravelled. Following Simmel (1957), Appadurai begins by reversing routinely accepted notions about the source of commodity values. Rather than seeing exchange as following the mutual valuation of objects by the parties to it, exchange is viewed as the

source of value; it is the act of exchange itself that endows objects with value, setting the parameters of utility and scarcity. Appadurai insists that the link between value and exchange is political, it being the interaction of 'reciprocal sacrifice' and power that creates economic value (*ibid*.: 4). In other words, the relative power of the actors and the structural conditions governing the exchange help determine the value of goods and services. The concept of regimes of value does not imply that the parties engaged in exchange share the same set of cultural assumptions entirely; only a minimal degree of coherence of value is necessary for an exchange to take place.

I use the regimes of value approach to analyse the ways in which multinational direct sales companies engage with the market in Ponta de Pedras. I examine the double exchange of direct sales – the exchange of sales service for commission and the exchange of personal care products for cash – to show how the valuation of both sales service and products results from the uneasy articulation between the market logic of global capitalism and the local conditions of Amazonian markets. This perspective helps explain why direct sales representatives are not as successful in their sales as company managers expect them to be and why local representatives continue to value their work even when they fail to earn money and risk falling into debt.

In the following sections I analyse two distinct regimes of value at work: the first governs the exchange relationship between the direct sales companies and local representatives, the second the exchange relationship between representatives and their customers. A third perspective, that of the relationship between the direct sales companies and the end consumers, highlights the economic structures and marketing communications that shape the demand for direct sales products in the local market. Elsewhere I discuss in detail the value of direct sales products as signifiers of modernity and global social inclusion (Chelekis 2017). The desirability and limited availability of beauty and household products through direct sales is an overarching characteristic of the market context that informs both sets of exchange relationships, although representatives and their customers relate to and value the products differently.

The findings of this study show how direct sales representatives must mediate between global and local regimes of value. I find that the articulation of these regimes places direct sales representatives in a position of 'precarious mediation' in which they must balance the contradictory demands of both regimes. The precariousness of their positions directly informs their valuations of their work and their sales strategies, both facilitating and limiting the market penetration of direct sales companies in this region. In sum, this example demonstrates that global capitalism, especially the retailing forces of vertical integration, not only affects physical market places and consumerist orientations, it also shapes local market contexts and relationships while sometimes being constrained by them as well.

Field site and methodology

This chapter is based on ethnographic research conducted in 2008–2009 in the municipality of Ponta de Pedras, on Marajó island in the state of Pará. It focuses particularly on two direct sales companies, Avon and Natura, the most sought-after cosmetic and perfume brands. The municipality was founded in 1737 by Mercedarian missionaries, and the current population is often referred to as a 'historical peasantry' of mixed European, indigenous and African ancestry. While the term *caboclos* is sometimes used to identify this Amazonian population in the academic literature, locally the term is loaded with negative connotations.

I conducted participant observation and interviews in three different communities of the municipality: the town of Ponta de Pedras itself, a river interior community called Rio Fortaleza, and adjacent upland interior communities known as Antonio Vieira and Jagarajó. Each community represents a distinct socio-economic context: farming and bay fishing are dominant in the upland communities, while the river interior is characterized by production of *açaí*, a palm fruit, and river fishing (particularly for shrimp). In contrast to both, the town of Ponta de Pedras is a market destination for productive activities in the interior, as well as a way-point for forest and agricultural exports destined for Belém and beyond. In addition, the public sector – including the mayor's office, the city council, public

schools and the hospital – employ a relatively large number of residents in the town. In each setting, the work of direct sales articulates with and is shaped by highly gendered economic arrangements and degrees of articulation with regional, national and international markets. Semi-structured interviews with sector managers in Belém, Pará state, and Campinas, São Paulo state, were also conducted to learn about the local managers' own perspectives and to obtain an organizational overview. While only one Avon meeting occurred in Ponta de Pedras during the course of fieldwork, I attended Avon and Natura meetings in Belém and Campinas to understand better the community atmosphere, sense of belonging and motivational encouragement that representatives are ideally subjected to and in which they participate.

Regime of value 1: Global companies and local representatives

Global structure and the politics of exchange

In the direct sales distribution system, anyone with state-issued identification and a residential address can sign up to become a licensed sales representative for a direct sales company, paying a small fee for a product starter kit that can be sold for an initial profit. Representatives sell the company's products to friends, acquaintances, work colleagues and family members using a product catalogue printed and distributed on a bi-monthly basis by the company. Representatives typically earn a thirty percent commission from their total sales, and companies often offer prizes for referring new representatives or meeting limited-time sales goals. Customers ideally pay for their purchases when the representative delivers them, and the representative sends her payment before the due date. This means that representatives can order products and receive them before securing any payment from the customer (Fig. 12.1). Some representatives buy products with their own money to sell, rather than have customers place orders. However, this approach, often called 'working with a stock,' requires having the financial capital to afford the upfront investment and is therefore not an option for poorer representatives.

In this first regime of value, representatives exchange their labour as a salesforce for a set rate of commission. As multinational corporations, direct

sales companies have much more power to dictate the conditions of the exchange and to determine the value of the products and the remuneration of their salesforce. Despite the ethos of self-help and the rhetoric of empowering women that direct sales companies often employ, representatives work on the basis of a legally enforceable contract designed and controlled entirely by the corporation. While the retail price and commission laid down by the companies is certainly predicated on supply-and-demand market calculations by company executives, individual representatives have no power to modify or even suggest changes or amendments to the standardized contract. They simply agree to sell under the terms and conditions provided, or they do not become direct sales representatives.

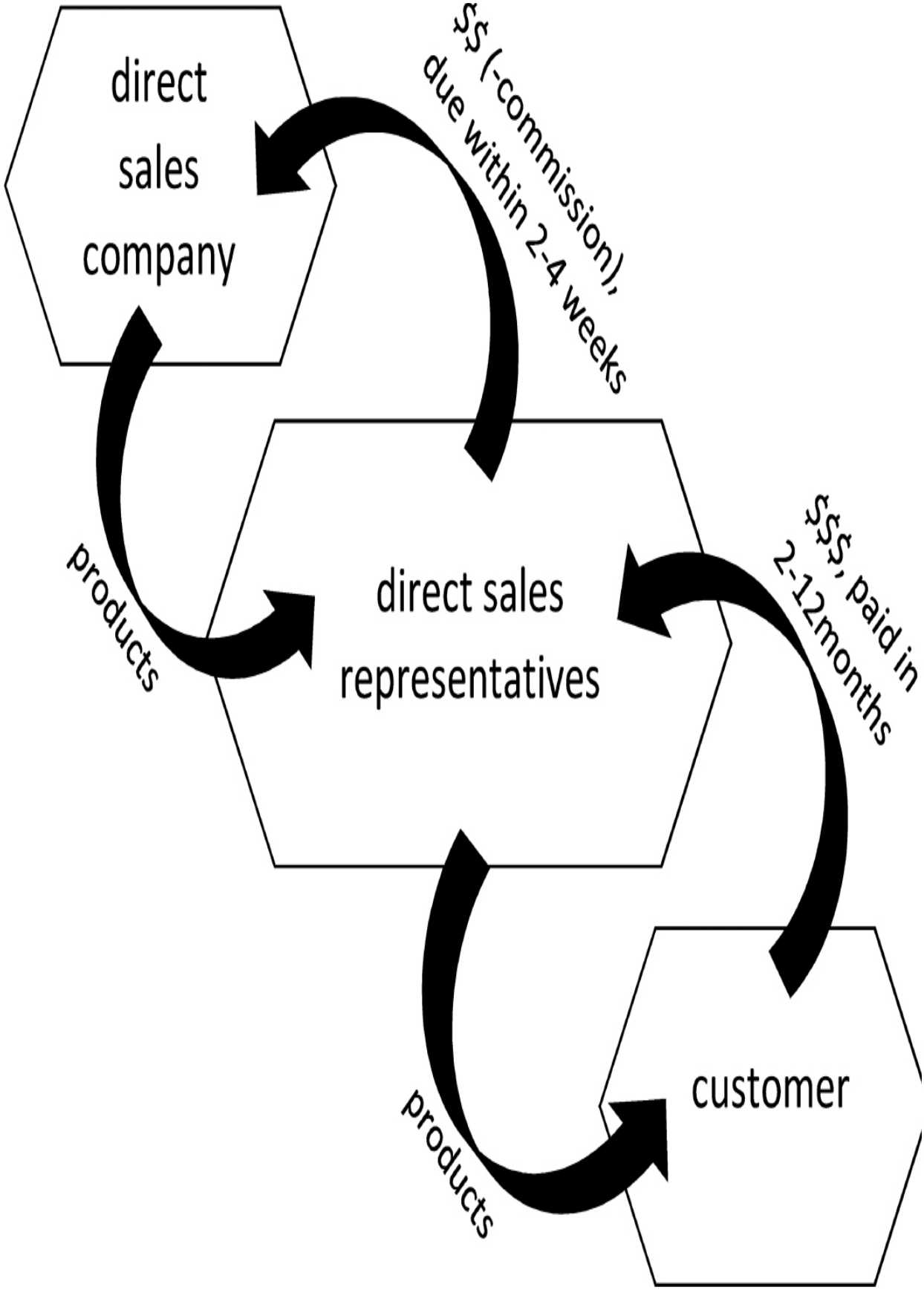

direct
sales
company
$$ (-commission),
due within 2-4 weeks
products
direct sales
representatives
$$$, paid in
2-12months
products
customer

Fig. 12.1: Direct sales representatives often pay for products before receiving full payment from customers (copyright: Jessica Chelekis).

The contact requires the direct sales company to honour the representatives' thirty percent commission on their sales, but it is primarily structured to protect the company's interests. The contract sets out the company's right to define payment due dates, issue fines for late payments and put indebted representatives on the Brazilian national credit protection service (SPC) list. This typically occurs when a representative is more than three months late with a payment to the company. When a representative's name is sent to the SPC it affects her credit rating, and she is barred from taking out any new bank loans and credit cards or receiving federal assistance for agricultural or agro-forestry activities until the debt is paid.

At the time of my research, there were approximately 200 official Avon representatives in the municipality. However, the official record does not take into account the number of women informally selling Avon products. In Ponta de Pedras, getting on the SPC is known as having a 'dirty name' (*nome sujo*) and is a common occurrence. Many women then resort to using their husband's or other family member's name to sign up again, or they have an officially registered representative place orders for them. Marissa, the coordinator, often does this for women who have fallen into debt with the company. Unlike Avon, Natura does not have a local coordinator, so there was no official documentation of the number of representatives. Based on my observations, I estimated there were between fifteen and twenty.

The market ideology of direct sales

In 2009, 76% of the 74 million direct sales representatives worldwide were women; in Brazil, the percentage of women involved increases to over 94% (WFDSA 2010; 2016). This is not to say that men do not participate in direct sales work or occupy top executive positions in direct sales organizations. But unlike the vast majority of businesses, direct sales companies position themselves as the ideal way for women – especially housewives and mothers – to earn their own money, supplement the household income, go into business for themselves and be their own boss, all without compromising their fulfillment of domestic and family obligations. In short, direct sales

organizations promise to solve a major contradiction of capitalism. As Biggart suggests, direct sales companies 'are surely capitalist enterprises, but they are not corporate capitalism of the sort that dominates the American economy' (1989: 7). Similarly, Wilson asserts that direct sales are 'capitalist yet anti-corporate' (1999: 405). Catalogue direct sales represents a radical departure from the typical retail model. Rather than insist on a separation of 'home' and 'business', 'private life' and 'work life', the direct sales model is based on the assumption that social life and business are intertwined, and that combining work and home suits most women best.

Thus, direct sales companies are strongly inflected with a self-help and entrepreneurial ethos. Sector managers and coordinators are meant to provide the 'personal touch' to the otherwise impersonal contract. They play an important role in transmitting company values by guiding and shaping their otherwise untrained representatives through monthly meetings. They distribute the company's inspirational and 'how-to' literature, awards and discounts. Avon and Natura literature is replete with self-help messages: as a representative, you gain independence and increased confidence, and most importantly you realize lifelong dreams such as buying a new car or putting your children through college.

Melissa, an Avon sector manager located in the suburbs of Belém, explained how the company's market ideology is expressed and communicated in order to shape representatives' sales performance. She persuades potential representative recruits that Avon can help 'build your dream' or 'make your dream come true'. By 'dreams', Avon is referring to the things a representative would like to achieve in her life, such as buying a house, a car, educating her children, pursuing a hobby, and so on. She stated that women do not usually want to sell Avon just because it is a fun thing to do. The goal is to make money, and not just enough money to get by, but ever increasing profits in order to fulfil corresponding increases in lifestyle and material desires. If a representative has a specific goal for her future profits, then she will have greater motivation to sell more Avon products. This pitch for recruiting new representatives is a classic strategy in direct sales. Melissa has a number of local coordinators who help her recruit new representatives, and she works closely with them so that they use the same

technique of persuading women that they can finally achieve what they have always wanted by selling Avon.

Adriana is the Avon sector manager for the entire island of Marajó; at the time of my fieldwork, she had been the manager for 3 years. One of Adriana's biggest problems is travel and transportation, and this is where the first disjuncture occurs in the chain of management between Avon headquarters in São Paulo and the Amazonian interior. She complained that her bosses do not understand the reality of doing business in Marajó. They question her travel expenses because they do not understand how expensive and slow it is to travel around an island with an underdeveloped transportation infrastructure. In order to get from one town in Marajó to another, one needs to travel first back to the city of Belém and then take a boat to the next location. Passenger boats leave Belém for Marajó at most once a day. This means that she often has to spend a night in Belém in between visits to various communities on Marajó. Although under company policy Adriana is supposed to hold a meeting in each of the 12 municipalities on Marajó every month, she manages at most three or four meetings per year in Ponta de Pedras. In my 11 months of fieldwork, she held only one meeting.

Marissa has worked as the local Avon coordinator for 16 years. When I asked her about the 'building your dreams' approach to recruiting new representatives, as described by Melissa above, she had no idea what I meant; she had never been introduced to this concept. Marissa's relationship with Adriana is missing this crucial transfer of official company scripts. Throughout the fieldwork, Marissa constantly complained about Adriana's unavailability; she was notoriously difficult to get hold of on the phone and never returned her calls. These communication issues, in addition to her very infrequent visits to Ponta de Pedras, results in a very fragile link between Avon corporate philosophy and Marissa's approach to managing her sales force.

In one of her rare meetings with representatives in Ponta de Pedras, Adriana emphasized the importance of using the Avon website to learn about products and place their orders. 'It's easy and more convenient than sending orders by mail', she told about 50 representatives gathered in the open-air

meeting space of a local hotel. Despite her 3 years travelling around Marajó Island talking to coordinators and representatives, Adriana is still unaware of the basic realities of rural municipalities: internet access is not easy or convenient for the majority of direct sales representatives. Most people in Ponta de Pedras have very little experience in using a computer, much less the Internet. Unlike cell phones and televisions, computers had not yet made their way into rural Amazonian homes.

Natura has even less managerial presence than Avon in Ponta de Pedras, with no manager or local coordinator to assist representatives. Most Natura representatives in Ponta de Pedras either work informally for an officially registered representative who lives in Belém (usually a relative) or register with the company using an address in Belém. This means that Natura holds no meetings in Ponta de Pedras. Natura representatives travel to Belém to pick up their product shipments, but they rarely attend the meetings held there. They miss out completely on the motivational talks and product information disseminated at these meetings, which the company insists are essential for representatives' success.

This first regime of value is marked by very little overlap of cultural values and assumptions. The direct sales companies are strongly marked by an ideology of capitalist empowerment aimed particularly at women, and organizational leaders assume that their local representatives are exposed to a certain level of sales techniques and motivational orientations, and live in areas with a certain level of infrastructural development. A major factor in this lack of cultural convergence is not just that communication between the company and its representatives flows in only one direction; but that even this unidirectional communication is very fragile and fragmented.

The exchange between direct sales companies and local representatives is strongly characterized by the powerful position that direct sales companies occupy. They have the power to dictate the value of both their products and the compensation of their representatives, both of which are informed not by the input of representatives themselves, but by competitors' offers and labour market analyses. In addition to their ability to exact late fines and penalties, direct sales companies are free from the obligation to provide traditional

employee benefits, such as a minimum wage and sick leave, by retaining their salesforce as independent contractors.

This contractual arrangement poses few problems for the majority of representatives in urban areas of Brazil, where direct sales work easily yields a substantial supplemental income, varying according to the amount of time and effort invested. Smoothly running infrastructure, including the ability to place orders online, frequent access to local managers who provide encouragement and support and the unproblematic ability to collect payments from customers all contribute to the remunerative and even social value of working as a direct sales representative. Customers, representatives and the company all operate under the same general understanding of how the sales system works; for example, the customer pays in full when the representative delivers the product.

However, in Ponta de Pedras and remote villages and towns like it the representatives must strike a balance between the companies' expectations and local market conditions that are fundamentally at odds with each other. Meeting the basic requirements of direct sales companies rests in representatives' ability to employ financial and social capital in their exchange relationships with their customers. The regime of value at work in the representative–customer relationship is greatly characterized by obligations to extend informal credit and representatives' inability to enforce sales agreements. Consequently, while direct sales work in Ponta de Pedras is indeed valued for the supplemental income it can ocassionally result in, it is valued even more as an opportunity to consume goods at reduced prices. The next section closely examines the local conditions that give rise to this valuation of direct sales work.

Regime of value 2: Local representatives and their customers

The local economy

Europe's colonial history of resource extraction from the Brazilian Amazon has left a legacy of underdevelopment in this region (Bunker 185; Moran 1993). *Açaí*, a palm fruit mainly produced in the river interior, is the foundation of Ponta de Pedras' economy. The fruit has come under increasing agro-forestry management by local producers as the market for it

has steadily expanded over the past three decades (Brondízio 2004; 2008; VanWey *et al.* 2007). Most residents of the municipality have unsteady incomes that follow seasonal cycles. Even those who are not directly involved in the *açaí* economy, such as retailers and vendors, are affected by the seasonal cycles of production, as money flows more freely in the local economy during the harvest period from October to January. The majority of people with regular incomes are public employees and those receiving government benefits such as pensions. The municipality employs many more people than is strictly necessary, in part to help alleviate the unemployment rate, but also because of clientelistic politics, in which the mayor and city council members buy votes by guaranteeing public jobs for certain voters. As a result, all municipal and city council buildings in town have an excess of guards, janitors, secretaries, assistants and people who serve coffee and snacks.

Next to the various forms of public employment, informal work makes up the vast majority of household income. Agriculturalists, fishermen, casual labourers, a wide variety of retailers, service providers and itinerant traders sell most, if not all, of their services and goods informally. Handmade signs proclaiming the availability of goods and services decorate many homes' exteriors, for example, *Faz-se chapinha aqui* (hair straightening available here; Fig. 12.2) and *Vende-se chopp* (*chopp* is a local term for a frozen treat, usually fruit juice in a small plastic bag). In the town survey, 32 of 38 households reported that casual labour was a significant source of income. The majority of informal work is characterized by highly uneven, usually seasonal income. My attempts to gather information on the financial situations of many households were ultimately thwarted by the pervasive lack of records of transactions and interest on the part of residents. Most research participants were simply unable to give a rough estimate of their monthly incomes and expenses. Even Nina, a representative I knew to be diligent in keeping sales records, became frustrated by my questions, telling me:

Look, people just don't think about it… People here live from paycheck to paycheck and are always in debt. Nobody would be able to sleep at night if

they thought about their budgets. I never thought about how much I spend on things until you started to ask me about it.

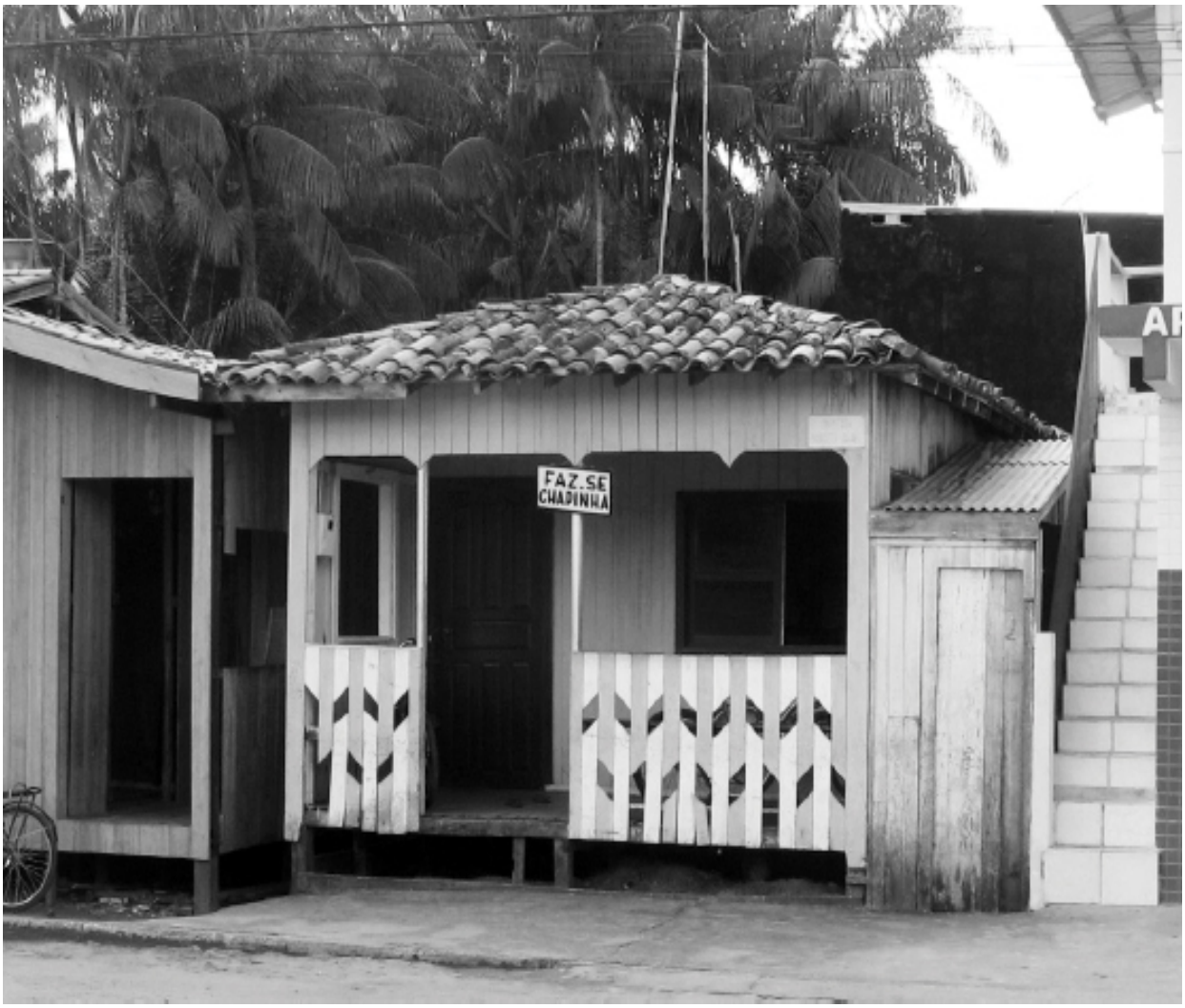


Fig. 12.2: Faz-se chapinha: *hair straightening services offered at this home (photo by the author).*

Obligation to sell on credit

Throughout the Amazon, from the rubber boom period to the present, informal traders have continued to provide credit for household goods in exchange for forest and agricultural crops (Schwartzman 1991; Walker 2012). Although exploitation at the hands of informal traders has been an important topic in Amazonian history (Schmink and Wood 1992), they often offer the best of a limited range of options for acquiring household staples (Walker 2012). Furthermore, the pervasive necessity for informal credit also

means that those who go into retailing and vending with limited capital – both economic and social – are vulnerable to economic losses from the inconvenient to the catastrophic if they fail to collect on their customers' debts. For direct sales representatives, extending credit is unavoidable. As Marissa explained, 'If she [the representative] doesn't sell on credit, she's not going to sell anything.' Relationships are built through the extension of credit and the payment of debt, and therefore the products involved in these exchanges represent these relationships. Given the widely accepted practice of selling on credit in Ponta de Pedras, the local concept of 'selling' is an act that is completely separate from collecting payment. As one representative phrased it: 'Selling is easy; collecting [payment] is much harder.' Other representatives define the difference between selling a product and receiving payment for the same product as a difference in attitude on the part of the customer: 'She [the customer] buys happily, but she is not happy when it's time to pay. She is annoyed when it's time to pay.' Nina, one of the most successful Natura representatives in Ponta de Pedras, explained it this way:

No one will ever voluntarily hand you the money they owe you. It is the seller's job to chase them up. If they can't pay the day you visit them, you find out when they're getting paid, and you'll be the first person to knock on their door, because most people have a lot of debts … if you get to their door too late, even on pay day, they will say they have no money left. Then you have no choice but to wait until next pay day, and try again.

There is no formal or legal recourse for the vendor if a customer refuses to pay for a product he or she has taken on credit. Therefore, collecting payment from customers depends on marshalling all kinds of social knowledge: from knowing the exact date the mayor's office pays its employees to tracking customers' movements around town and their travel to the city or to other communities. If a customer has left town, was it a health emergency? If someone owing money has returned after a long period away, has her financial situation changed? Has a customer recently experienced a setback, such as losing a job or separating from her spouse? The diligent direct sales representative gathers information by talking to people on the

street, to customer's neighbours, family and friends, and employing that knowledge in skilfully manipulating their relationships with their customers.

Nina is widely recognized as one of the most successful Natura representatives in the municipality. She also runs a hair salon from home and does not always have time to go out collecting payments. Due to her busy schedule, Nina pays a *cobradora* (collector) a small fee to make visits for her from time to time. She told me about a former *cobradora* she had, Fiona, who was not good at her job. Nina said she did not know how to pressure people to give her the money they owed. Later, when Fiona began to sell Natura for herself, Nina said she became a 'harder' person; she began to understand the pressure of needing to be paid for her orders. When Nina would send Fiona out to collect payments, she would come back with very little money. Nina would say to her, 'Why could you only get so little?' Fiona would respond that if they refuse to give her the money, she could not put her hands in their pockets and take it. But Nina argued that she could do something:

You have to pressure people, and say things like, 'This is the last payment date, and you told me you would have this money for me, and I really need it, I can't wait any longer.' When you talk to people like that, they will say, 'OK then, I'll pay you now, and pay the other guy [some other creditor] later. And now I'm done, I'm free of you.'

A customer who puts off paying and avoids her creditors is not necessarily a customer who will never pay; the representative just has to be persistent. Customers who are late with their payments are considered a nuisance, and representatives try to minimize late payments as best as they can. However, many customers live precariously on the financial edge, where one stroke of bad luck means they are unable to make a payment they previously counted on making. Although I heard stories of malicious customers who bought products on credit with no intention of ever paying for them, representatives tend to believe that the majority of customers who fail to pay do not do so deliberately. Direct sales representatives are in the same financial boat as most of their customers and often have outstanding debts themselves.

Therefore, representatives usually give up on collecting payment from a customer after two or three visits. Many told me they are embarrassed to have to ask a customer repeatedly for the money she owes them. They would rather abandon the money rather than be perceived as someone who hounds poor customers. The pushy creditor is seen as selfish and unconcerned about their customers' plight. Thus, late or non-payments may damage a relationship, but not necessarily. It depends on how the customer communicates and how the direct sales representative understands the conditions of non-payment. Additionally, staying on good terms with a late or non-paying customer has potential long-term benefits. A change in a customer's fortune can mean that a shrewd seller who had previously given up on her may venture to see if she is now in a position to pay a long outstanding debt.

Even when it is clear that the customer is the one who is acting selfishly and taking advantage of the vendor's credit, if the customer claims he or she is unable to make the payment, social etiquette dictates that the vendor should wait. If a creditor comes across as too pushy, customers become angry. They may finally make the payment, but in these cases the exchange relationship is also damaged, and customers will not purchase a second time from a pushy representative. When a customer consistently avoids a creditor or repeatedly gives excuses for not paying, the vendor has to decide whether to continue pursuing payment from the customer or cut her losses and give up. A customer who avoids paying altogether is called a *caloteiro/a*, and if the lack of payment was intentional, the credit relationship is severed. Several representatives told me that when a customer becomes a *caloteira*, the representative loses three things: the product, the money and the relationship. When a customer fails to pay, she generally tries to avoid running into the person she owes in public.

Sales strategies

While direct sales representatives may technically ask any price they wish for the products they sell, the majority of representative use the nationally distributed catalogues and adhere to the companies' printed retail prices. And while these companies' beauty and domestic consumer goods are common

features of Amazonian homes, many potential customers are content to read the catalogues as entertaining window shopping rather than commit to a purchase. When asked what are the essential qualities involved in achieving success in this line of work, representatives responded that being a good talker and knowing the products are most important. Many of them said that it helps greatly if the seller likes to read, since it is necessary to read the company literature to know the products and talk about them to customers. However, most direct sales representatives freely admitted that they paid little or no attention to the product literature when it arrives with their orders. While many study the catalogue itself, especially to learn what products are on special offer, they do not read the corporate advice leaflets that are included with it.

Representatives often refer to one of two types selling: the literal act of selling a product to a customer, and 'selling' as persuasion, being a good talker and convincing otherwise unsure customers to commit to a purchase. Marissa explains the difference in between these kinds of selling:

Marissa: Olha, mana! I'll tell the truth, I am not a good *revendedora*. I don't know how to sell. I've already told you this, right? … The way to do it is like this, to say [to the customer], 'Let me tell you about this product …' I don't have that way of selling, you know? Not like Nina – she has it, right? …

Jessica: But didn't you tell me that you almost always have the highest sales?[1]

Marissa: No, I do sell. But not that kind of selling, the kind I think is cool. To arrive at the door, talk smoothly, introduce yourself, introduce the product, like that, you know? I sell, yes, but I don't have … that way with it.

The majority of representatives do very little persuasive selling; most let the catalogues do the talking for them. In some cases, particularly among those who live in the interior, the representative barely even speaks to her customers. Several Avon representatives who live in Jagarajó and Rio Fortaleza told me that they simply drop off the catalogue at a customer's

house, let the customer mark the products she wants and then pick it up the next day. Most often, a representative will simply inform the customer about the newest perfume to come out and which products are on sale, and then leave the customer to peruse the catalogue in her own time. The sales calls I witnessed were just as likely to be awkward encounters as they were social visits among friends (Fig. 12.3).

Representatives and socio-economic status

In a highly unusual move, Nina told me how one time she dealt with a customer who had repeatedly refused to pay by stealing her bicycle. When the customer asked for the bicycle back, Nina informed her that she had taken it as collateral and she would return the bicycle when the customer paid her bill. She deceived the customer by implying that she had spoken with a city official who gave her implicit approval to do this. In actuality, a man from the city council had told her that such a move is technically illegal. While she managed to pull off this particular stunt, she confessed that she was scared and would never dare try it again.



Fig. 12.3: Avon representative visits a client's home, while children watch (photo by the author).

While Nina has managed to overcome her embarrassment in repeatedly asking for payment and has learned how to read people and treat them accordingly, the vast majority of representatives have not acquired her skills. Moreover, her sales technique is not the sole source of her success; her social standing in Ponta de Pedras is an equally important factor. Nina comes from a well-respected family; her great-uncle was one of the most popular mayors in recent history. Her immediate family is not a part of the local elite, but nor do they count as poor, and her connections with wealthier members of her extended family means she is able to assume a more authoritative position in relation to her ordinary customers. Nina knows how to press people for their payments and when to do it, and she is still largely able to retain her customers' loyalty.

There are many different types of retailers in Ponta de Pedras, from the well-established *mercados* run by the local elite to poor women selling candy and frozen treats from temporary kiosks; from itinerate river traders to home-based hair and nail salons in town. In the local market landscape, having a permanent location for one's business indicates success and a comfortable margin of profit for re-investment. However, retailing from a storefront carries a certain amount of risk that also requires a comfortable financial safety net. While some small storekeepers also sell Avon or Natura in addition to their general stock, the majority of direct sales representatives do not have the financial capital or socio-economic status to borrow the capital for such an enterprise. Even one of the most successful Avon representatives found the prospect risky:

Some people have asked me why I don't open my own store. But to tell you the truth, I am much more comfortable selling face to face. If I walk down the street with my products in a plastic bag, nobody on the street knows what I'm carrying, what this stuff is for. I can visit my clients, and I can be selective. With a store, you have to stay there, and you can't be as selective about who you sell to. You're obliged to sell to whoever walks in, and I'm not comfortable with that.

Direct sales representatives at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum are at the greatest risk of falling into debt from late-paying customers, and therefore they engage in very conservative sales strategies. They often avoid customers who place large orders because customers who owe only a small amount of money are more likely to pay than those who owe a large sum. They also try to avoid customers who do not have a steady income, instead seeking out customers they know to have a steady income through government employment or benefits. Representatives often complained that some of their customers do not take them seriously. 'They think that it's not really a job, selling Avon; but it is a job, just like any other,' said one Avon representative. 'I told one customer, who kept putting me off, I said, "Look, you have to pay me, because I have to pay for my boxes, and we have to pay fines if we're late." And she responded, "You pay fines?" And I showed her the invoice. She thought we didn't have to pay anything.'

Some representatives take advantage of their patron-client relationships with politicians and members of the local elite. Diane, the wife of a city councilman, regularly buys products from four different representatives, but she will buy something from almost anyone who comes to her door:

Sometimes I end up buying something when I don't really want to. The *revendedora* shows up at my door, and I know she needs money … maybe her husband doesn't have a job now that the *açaí* season is over. I don't want to disappoint the *revendedora*; I want to stay on good terms with her.

But representatives cannot always be sure that a well-to-do customer will not go into debt as well. Indeed, several representatives claimed that relatively poor customers tend to be more conscientious about their payments than those who have a comfortable income. Some political patrons, like Diane in the example above, are diligent about 'staying on good terms' with a wide variety of traders and retailers, but many more of the local middle and upper classes take their debts to those of lower status less seriously. In sum, direct sales representatives in Ponta de Pedras span the socio-economic spectrum, with those near the top having the social and financial capital to aspire more keenly to the rhetoric of empowerment through profits and still meet the corporate payment deadlines. Poorer representatives, who are in much

greater need of the kind of empowerment extolled by the direct sales companies, engage in more conservative sales strategies and have fewer resources with which to pressure late customers for payments.

Precarious mediation

Appadurai notes that traders are 'critical agents for the articulation of supply and demand' in modern and pre-modern societies, both within and across cultural settings (1989: 33). In this case, local representatives act as the 'critical agents' articulating the supply of goods produced by the direct sales companies with consumer demand in Ponta de Pedras. An important aspect to note is the passivity with which representatives carry out their sales. The vast majority of representatives put little or no effort into selling – that is, persuading customers to commit to a purchase. They allow the catalogue to do the work for them, and by and large customers are more than happy with this arrangement. Thus, the representative is practically a transparent agent in mediating the relationship between the customer and the direct sales brand. However, once a customer has decided to make a purchase, the mechanisms of payment negotiation swing into action, informed by an array of personal and social factors, from the relative social and financial status of representative and customer, to their exchange history, the representative's sales strategies and the customer's reputation.

Because of the social power that shapes their exchange relationships within each respective regime of value, representatives can often be described as enacting a precarious sort of mediation. Due to the combination of the reliance of direct selling on social networks and the local use of informal credit, the social status of customers and representatives and their access to financial and social capital greatly inform the exchange value of direct sales products. The company sets the price that representatives owe for product orders and publishes retail prices in its sales catalogues, but whether or not a customer can or is willing to pay the set price depends on many social and economic factors, including customers' own unforeseen expenses.

The fact that profitable sales in Ponta de Pedras hinge on factors other than the set price remains obscured in the perspective of company

management. Direct sales companies emphasize that becoming a representative requires no special skills, training or education. Yet once a person signs up for the job, the company attempts to mould each direct seller into the motivated, productive salesperson with a 'go-getter' attitude who works hard to increase her sales. The model hinges on transmitting a specific kind of market orientation based on the values of empowerment as a motivation for pursuing profits. But what, according to the direct sales companies, should a representative do if a customer does not pay on time? What are the best techniques for pursuing payment without annoying your customers? None of the Natura or Avon literature I came across even mentions the subject of how to collect payments. The standard assumption is that the customer pays upon delivery of the product. While there only needs to be a minimum degree of value coherence in a particular regime of value, the structural and cultural gulf separating the market context of Ponta de Pedras and the 'global' context of direct sales companies – even those with headquarters in Brazil's metropolitan centres – directly shapes the sales performance of local representatives. This does not affect the pricing of products or the rate of compensation, but it does result in a high rate of penalty fees and indebtedness.

Their relative positions of low power and status within both regimes, coupled with their obligation to honour sales contracts with the companies and their inability to enforce sales agreements with their customers, places representatives in a precarious position. They are at risk of falling into debt themselves, which in turn limits their sales performance and sales aspirations. Yet the system of informal credit prevalent in this region (as it is in many parts of the underdeveloped and developing world) is the only way in which the majority of rural Amazonian customers are able to purchase direct sales products at all. Some customers find themselves over-extended and do not manage their debts well, and a few even abuse the system, but for the majority of residents, this system allows access to consumer goods that are otherwise much more difficult and expensive to come by.

Conclusion: Why work as a direct sales representative?

During fieldwork, Marissa told me on several occasions that she just wanted to quit; being the Avon coordinator was too much work for too little pay. When I asked what kept her from quitting, she told me, 'Whenever I think about it, I think about the *revendedoras* (representatives) that depend on this work, they depend on me. It means so much to them; they really need it, especially the *revendedoras* who live in the interior. I can't quit because of them.' Marissa says that she has remained the Avon coordinator for this long because she cares so much about the representatives who depend on her. She does not believe that anyone else could do the job as well as she does. At the same time, she receives no recognition for her hard work from the company. Instead, she receives a bi-monthly reminder in the Avon reports that she has not met her sales goals. Marissa feels that Avon has repeatedly let her down when, from her perspective, she has dedicated so many years to keeping things running smoothly for the representatives in Ponta de Pedras.

But why do these representatives depend on this work so much, as Marissa claims? While the corporations 'sell' the value of working as their representative in terms of profits, independence and empowerment, this is not the value of direct sales work for women in the lower rural Amazon. Women can and do earn money through direct sales, but it is risky, and the likelihood of losing money is just as great. Profits from direct sales depend in part on socio-economic status and having the wherewithal to deploy social capital to exert leverage in payment collection. Many representatives use direct sales work primarily as a consumption opportunity. A common strategy is to sell in order to buy products, either selling just enough to cover the cost of a product, or simply using their commission as a thirty percent discount.

Finally, some representatives value this work for the level of involvement in beauty products and customer relationships it affords. When asked, these representatives simply said, 'It's cool thing to do.' Contrary to what Melissa, the sector manager, told me, that no one wants to sell Avon just for the sake of selling Avon, that is exactly what some of these women want to do (Chelekis 2017). They are not working to 'build their dreams', predicated on making a substantial difference in their quality of life, such as buying a new home or vehicle. For these women, success is defined in terms of their

ability to continue selling products without falling into debt and managing their customers in such a way that they can help out with household expenses or buy products for themselves and their families.

'If we live in the age of global market integration, then markets of all kinds exist on a continuum with each other; each articulates in its unique, locally embedded fashion with the world economy …' (Applbaum 2012: 269). I would add that not even the world economy is as placeless or as abstract as it is often represented. In the end, global direct sales companies are just as embedded in empirical markets as rural *açaí* producers in Ponta de Pedras, and local customers can be just as calculating and self-interested as corporate executives. The consequences of this particular articulation of global market and local context is an often uncomfortable tension embodied in direct sales representatives, who find themselves awkwardly balancing their impersonal exchange contract with the distant corporation and their personal exchange relationships with their customers. Global vertical integration and the presence of corporations in developing markets continue to rise (Bronnenberg and Ellickson 2015; Hamilton *et al*. 2011), and this phenomenon indeed requires perspectives that integrate market principles and contexts rather than analysing them separately. The regimes of value approach takes into account how market principles are articulated with the realities of particular market places to understand the precarious mediation that direct sales representatives perform and the appeal of this work despite the financial risks.

Note

1. I later learned that Marissa has the highest sales volumes because she often places orders for a few other women under her name, women who have gone into debt with the company and cannot place orders themselves.

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Chapter 13

Tourists on the *Nasara*: The ritual ground as a space for commodification in Vanuatu, southwest Pacific

Hugo DeBlock

Introduction

Vanuatu, formerly the New Hebrides, is a nation state of over 80 islands in what is traditionally referred to as the culture area of Melanesia, in the southwest Pacific. As the New Hebrides, it was ruled by a joint Anglo-French Condominium from 1906 until 1980, when it gained independence and adopted its contemporary name. The area was documented from early contact history onwards, first by whalers, labour traders, missionaries and ethnologists and by the early twentieth century by some of the earliest anthropologists.[1] In contemporary Vanuatu, the production of culture takes place in contexts of cultural revival as well as tourism. Artefacts (*artifak* in Bislama, the Pidgin *lingua franca* used in the islands of the archipelago) that function in revived ritual performances are remade, danced and often sold after performance to incoming buyers such as tourists and art collectors such as museum curators and gallery owners. These 'customary arts' (Skinner and Bolton 2012) often feature in local cultural festivals which are held at regular intervals in the islands, often promoted by the state in an ongoing wave of revival of *kastom* and *kalja*.[2] During festivals, the value of culture and the arts is negotiated by all involved, but also culture itself is commodified. This generates ambivalence and a feeling of loss of culture among local people and visitors alike, but it also generates a series of values that relate to status and prestige among the former. The contemporary

production of culture and the arts in Vanuatu is legitimized by notions of indigenized copyright (*kopiraet*), offering cultural as well as economic capital to producers and owners of objects and designs (for discussions of copyright in Vanuatu, see Geismar 2003; 2005a; 2005b).

The commodified ritual performance and, accordingly, the interaction between 'hosts' and 'guests' takes place on the *nasara* or ritual ground. A *nasara* is traditionally an outdoor space outside of or in close proximity to a village. It contains, or better used to contain, a ritual house as well as all paraphernalia of previous rituals and in many cases the human remains of deceased Big Men. However, such ritual grounds have largely disappeared since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries due to the influence of colonialism and the missions. It is only since the late 1970s and early 1980s that *nasara*s are beginning to resurface in the context of politicized *kastom* discourse and uses. Local communities in the islands are resurrecting their old *nasara*s, rebuilding them from the ground up, reviving their rituals and remaking the paraphernalia (the objects) that go with revival. Contemporary performances on *nasara*s, whether smaller or larger in scale, in the form of festivals almost always consist of dance sequences of performances of the past that are offered to local audiences as well as visitors. In most places the visitors are welcome, but in some they are kept away frominteraction. Visitors such as tourists do not just create the market, they also shape it in the sense that the local sculptor in Vanuatu today creates according to the tastes and desires of the Parisian or New York auction room-goer, a taste he knows and to which he accommodates himself. However, the local is one step ahead, in supplying what the buyer wants, namely the 'real' and 'authentic'. Based on fieldwork in Vanuatu between 2009 and 2011, primarily on the islands of Ambrym and Malakula, I argue here that local people have agency in the negotiations and transactions of art for money: they take part in globalization processes and in the global art world.

Tourism in Vanuatu

Tourism is Vanuatu's fastest growing business (40% of GDP), with most tourism development taking place in and around Vanuatu's capital of Port Vila on Efate Island. Another centre of development is in and around

Luganville, on Espiritu Santo. Efate, Santo and Tanna have the best kept road infrastructure and are the most accessible places by air and sea. They have been the main tourist sites in Vanuatu since the 1960s and 1970s (De Burlo 1989). Today, there is still a focus on the development of these locations (see, for example, the Vanuatu Tourism Development Master Plan 2004–2010). On Efate especially, however, the push for development has resulted in major problems over *kastom* land ownership. By 2008, 55% of all land on the island had been leased by expatriate investors and up to 90% of all coastal land (Rawlings 2008). By 2011 tourism, 'after years of stagnation, experienced a rapid growth' (Wittersheim 2011: 325). The number of visitors arriving by air rose by nearly 14% in 2007 and by 16% in 2008. And despite the world economic slowdown, tourist arrivals by air in January 2009 were 28% higher than in January 2008. By 2010, they exceeded 100,000 for the first time (*ibid*: 325).

Tourists in Vanuatu are the prime buyers of artefacts (Fig. 13.1). They buy the prototypical tourist arts, small enough to fit into a suitcase, but many of them are maturing into some sort of expert on their own terms and seek out those objects of culture that are also sought after by museum curators and other knowledgeable buyers. Tourists and tourism options in Vanuatu are of all sorts. Cruise ship tourists arrive by the thousands in Port Vila on Efate Island as well as in the more remote parts of the archipelago, where they can spend a couple of hours snorkelling or playing beach volleyball and consume some culture-on-the-side. In and around the urban centres of Port Vila and Luganville on Espiritu Santo, there is hotel and resort tourism, from basic to luxurious, with swimming pools and casinos. On Efate and Santo, moreover, guided tours and excursions to cultural villages and archaeological sites are available. Some tourists partake in the more adventurous offerings, such as hiking the Millennium Cave on Santo, diving Million Dollar Point and the SS *President Coolidge* just off the south coast of Santo (locally promoted as 'the world's most accessible shipwreck') or climbing Mount Yasur on Tanna (promoted as 'the world's most accessible active volcano'). As the next step up the adventure ladder, a smaller number of tourists explore the outer islands on their own, travelling by plane or cargo ship. In the islands, they stay in one of many locally owned bungalow

businesses that offer the authentic experience of sleeping in a village hut under a thatched roof. These most adventurous of tourists go for rougher hikes, for example, up one of the rugged volcanoes on Ambrym. Others who get to these difficult-to-reach places are the yachties, as they are called in Vanuatu. Travelling on their own boats, yachties get there with relative ease. While cruise-ship tourists are entertained on the beaches, where everything is brought to them, backpackers and yachties expect to see more pristine and authentic nature and culture.



Fig. 13.1: Tourist art for sale at a Port Vila Handicraft market in 2009 (photo by the author).

It was Lissant Bolton who first noted the 'increasing reach of tourism in the outer islands' (2007: 27). Tourists, as well as evangelists, NGO workers, anthropologists, art collectors and Australian, English, French and other expatriates living in Vanuatu continually visit its many diverse islands. Tourist categories are known, but one kind of tourist can easily turn into another in the course of a trip: all-in package-deal tourists may explore outside the safely enclosed beaches of their resorts, while adventurers may

want to experience some luxury in one of the fancier accommodation options at hand. The development of tourism is closely linked with the revival of culture. Cultural tourism brokers follow in the tracks of revivalist movements and festivals. Most island communities are happy to allow them and their customers into their sites and festivities, though others vehemently refuse.

For the island of Ambrym, a place that is known within the archipelago for its commodification of culture, Knut Rio noted that '[s]culptural art from Ambrym currently plays the role of spectacular and highly visible national symbols and represents an important asset for the island's tourist trade' (Rio 2009: 283), that *mage* male-graded ceremonial displays are 'nowadays displayed in ceremonial grounds [*nasara*s] for tourists' (*ibid*.: 285) and that its objects 'can easily be destroyed, banished, or sold to collectors and tourists' (*ibid*.: 306). For the island of Vao, Haidy Geismar also briefly mentions tourism, writing that Vao islanders today, while almost exclusively Christian, maintain their *nasara*s as sites of 'ancestry, memory, and identity' and ban tourists from visiting, unless a large sum of money is paid (2005b: 198).

Christopher Tilley reported on cruise-ship performances on the island of Wala, writing that these tourists were disappointed by the performances, calling them 'Disneyland in Vanuatu' (Tilley 1997: 79). Local cultural festivals aim at offering more pristine, authentic performances of culture and the arts.

Commodification and cultural revival: The *Back to my Roots* Festival[3]

Festivals (Fig. 13.2) are held for the sake of cultural revival and promoted as such by the government as well as for the sake of tourism, offering opportunities for promoting *kastom* as well as a legitimate response to the few means of making a living by selling cultural performances and valued artefacts as commodities. This relates to earlier movements, when ritual and its objects were traded between different local groups, with some men and their communities receiving great power and prestige from this; this is known in the literature as a system of cultural commerce (cf. Patterson 1981:

2002). Today, it costs a tourist about 500 *Vatu* (Vanuatu's currency; 500 *Vatu* is approximately 5 USD) to take a photograph of a standing slit drum on Ambrym. A performance of *rom* masked dancers can be ordered in Fanla (Fig. 13.3 and 13.4), the *kastom* village of before on Ambrym. This commodified version of the *rom* dance is performed on Fanla's *nasara* for 5000 *Vatu*. The main visitors to local cultural festivals, held in almost all the outer island locations throughout the dry season (also called the festival or yachtie season), are backpackers and yachties. Festivals usually take a couple of days and showcase a selection of ritual dances from the past. For a total of three days of festivities, the entry fee to the *Back to my Roots* festival in North Ambrym, which I highlight here, is 7000 *Vatu*. For that price, visitors get to see full-day programmes on the reopened Halhal Fantor *nasara*, including some male grade-taking ritual and an hour-long performance of the popular *rom* dance. By 2009, during my fieldwork in North Ambrym, *Back to my Roots* was the most successful festival in Vanuatu visitor-wise. At the time there were over twenty yachts anchored in front of the beach at Nobul. Some tourists had come in by boat or plane, as well as a couple of gallery owners.



Fig. 13.2: The audience at the Back to my Roots *Festival, Halhal Fantor* nasara*, 2009 (photo by the author).*



Fig. 13.3: Rom *masks dancing during the* Back to my Roots *Festival; a colossal* atingting *is standing at the back of the* nasara *(photo by the author).*



Fig. 13.4: Rom *masks on sticks for sale after performance in the back of the performance ground at Halhal Fantor* nasara *2009 (photo by the author).*

Back to my Roots started out small in 2001, with no or hardly any visitors or paying customers attending in the first years. Chief Sekor is the organizer of the festival and is in charge of matters of *kastom*. He is assisted by Norbert Nabong, a local school principal who is in charge of the more practical aspects of organizing a festival. It is Norbert who gave the festival its name: 'Back to my Roots' is not just English, it is also a phrase that suits visitors' desires and expectations in seeing the roots of these peoples and their bygone cultural traditions. As Norbert told me during fieldwork, the festival was never intended for profit only but first and foremost 'to show the youths the old *kastom* ways and to encourage them to go back to their roots'. As the presenter at the festival, he announces each year in both French and English that it is 'pour l'éducation de nos enfants, for the education of our children'. Its aim is twofold. First, it is to show the young the old *kastom* ways. Secondly, the entry fees are used to pay for children's school fees. While in the past ritual cycles could take many years of preparation, at festivals it is now only the most dramatic fragments, the culminating points of the ritual, that are re-enacted. To some locals, revived male grade-taking at festivals is legitimate. Others dispute the revived Melanesian *Big Man*. Some locals say that *rom* at festivals serve as an example to show to tourists for money; others say that dancing the *rom* on the *nasara* with the drums beating is always 'the real thing', with 'the spirit inside'. Yet these *rom* are also offered for sale after the performance. A *rom* mask that was danced at the festival, which enhances the price – usage is meant to equal authenticity – has a fixed price of 150,000 *Vatu* (150 USD).

On the festival programme were several dance performances, such as *bata* (a dance traditionally associated with boys' incision), music demonstrations (drums and flute), the culminating point of two *mage* male grade-takings and a *rom* performance. All rituals were attenuated in form and content. The 'male-graded society' system of the past is disrupted, with no continuity in the transfer of male grades or knowledge. It is nowadays impossible for men to accumulate the wealth necessary for several grade-takings and thus climb up the ladder of power and prestige. *Mage* performed at *Back to my Roots* incurs only a fraction of the former costs that entailed transfers of energy and wealth for each item to which the candidate gained

access (the rights to sacred insignia, dances, songs) and community participation in certain sequences, none of which has any place in today's revived *mage* ritual which is performed by only a few men. It is a spectacle to watch, not one in which to take part. The timing of the rites and the duration of the festival are too short for anything to be in real time, with many in-between performances keeping up the pace on the *nasara* for the audience. At the *Back to my Roots* festival, culture, in the form of the *mage* male-graded ritual, is performed for tourists as well as local people, who are mostly proud to see some of their lost and powerful past again.

The *nasara* and the idea of 'the market'

The commodification of self and object takes place on the commercial *nasara*. Local people use their authenticity and the authenticity of their sites as a form of symbolic capital in order to assert new kinds of power (cf. Lindholm 2008: 91). In Vanuatu, this means that people are eager to revive the performative and material aspects of their culture in order to re-establish their connections to a strong and powerful past which has been denied to them for a long time. It also means, however, that they wish to support their lives by providing their experience of culture to their tourist audiences for profit. Festivals are vehicles of commodification, aimed at providing an authentic experience for onlookers. Local people authenticate their *kastom* and validate their access to ancient *kalja*, while the tourist consumes the experience. To producers as well as consumers, the aspect that is central is that of 'performing the native'. This is why extraneous, 'modern' additions are excluded from performance, thus silencing its market aspect. The commodification of 'otherness' requires all 'others' to 'look other'. The authenticity of 'the native' equals 'cannibals' and 'savages', and as a trope this sells in a Western market. Local people exoticize themselves (Stanley 2007; Lindholm 2008) in order to satisfy the demand for 'the authentic other'. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett in particular tied tourism and festivals together, writing that 'to festivalize culture is to make every day a holiday' (1998: 62). The staged performance becomes some sort of artefact, repeated, canonical (*ibid*.). People offer their culture-as-artefact (ibid.) and their wares

in created back scenes on the side of the festival ground, again silencing the market and transactional aspects.

The point of reference for the contemporary setting of revival and commodification is the historical frame of collecting and collectors. For Vanuatu, there are two periods that stand out. The first period is that of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when a curio trade flourished in the wider Melanesian region, resulting, eventually, in a demand which was far greater than the supply. The second, more recent period is that of the late colonial period of the 1960s and 1970s, just prior to independence. This is a period that was marked by an increase in supply as well as demand and an increase in travel and tourism: what is known as the global tourism boom of that era, creating a whole new market segment. From the local perspective, it was a period marked by heightened tensions regarding copyright and ownership. The 1960s and 1970s are known as the time when the last of the Big Men who had achieved their position in the traditional sphere were still active on some of the islands. It was a time, local people now agree, that saw 'the last of the real'. Today, within ongoing revivalist movements in which ritual is re-enacted and objects reproduced, what constitutes 'the real' is still very present. Supply nowadays is increasingly being fine-tuned with demand, even though the supply is now greater than the demand. As local people see it, 'museums do not need anything anymore; they already have everything'. Prices, usually agreed by knowledgeable locals, elders and chiefs, are now often reduced by those who are eager to sell. A remark often heard by those opposed to this tendency is that 'the market is spoiled now'.

The history of the commodification of culture and the arts is best exemplified by the Ambrym and Malakula setting. The islands of Ambrym and Malakula in the north-central area of the archipelago are known as places with strong *kastom*. They are the beholders of revitalized *kastom* in competitive/festival ways. That Ambrym and Malakula are competitive is exemplified by the fact that Southeast Malakulans today refer to the Ambrymese and specifically the North Ambrymese as stealers of *kastom*: 'they stole our tam-tam design', it is said, 'and are since making big money with it'.[4] The North Ambrymese have been selling their slit drums (*atingting* in the North Ambrym language) for decades to international museums. The

documented history of the commodification and, subsequently, saturation of *atingting* on the market starts with the former Big Men and ethno-preneurs Tain Mal and his son Tofor, who ran a lucrative artefact business out of their village of Fanla, in North Ambrym, and into the world in the 1960s and 1970s (see also Patterson 1976; 1981; 2001; 2002). At the time, the *kastom* people were an important minority in the *kastom* movement, as well as in the tourist arena that was also emerging in those years. Tain Mal and Tofor claimed *kastom* copyright of slit drums as their own while at the same time developing new forms and designs (cf. Geismar 2005a: 448–450). In current contexts, in which supply exceeds demand, makers know that their slit drums, or any other items they wish to sell, still need to look old if they want to get a good price for their frozen-in-time 'masterpieces of tribal art'. Local people know that a 'masterpiece', from a Western viewpoint, signifies something rare or unique, exquisitely carved, sometimes attributed to a specific artist, and 'worth' – due to the frequent use of the dubious term by dealers and connoisseurs – incalculable sums of money in a Western art market.

Conclusion

The commodification of self and object is a dual process, a politically motivated expression of identity by local people, as well as an economic response to the global expansion of the tourism industry. In Vanuatu, this happens in a context of cultural revival that goes far beyond commodification alone. For Damian Skinner and Lissant Bolton, cultural revival is an important element of what they term 'customary arts', repeating the factors that stimulate its production. These can be a desire for continuity by local people, but also tourism, anthropological intervention, political considerations and demand in the art world (Skinner and Bolton 2012: 473). Revival is a tool representing the ongoing relevance of the past in the present by linking contemporary art practices with ideas of the past while reclaiming the value of old objects in the present (*ibid*.: 467). For Vanuatu, as we saw, the '*nasara* as a market space' is closely linked with the global art market and with supply and demand. The same strategies apply, albeit it in different forms, hidden from view, as a way of functioning successfully in some sort

of ‘authenticity’ trade. The main vehicle, as we also saw, is the local cultural festival, to which entry fees are charged and where ritual artefacts are transformed into much desired artworks by commodification processes such as performance and dance. As David Graeber has noted, a market-based ideology presents us with a set of propositions: ‘We are unique individuals who have unlimited desires; since there is no natural cut-off point at which anyone will have enough power, or money, or pleasure, or material possessions, and since resources are scarce, this means we will always be in at least tacit competition’ (Graeber 2001: 214). When customary arts become commercial, they shift meaning and value in going from island to auction room, and beyond. In travelling, they gain both monetary value and an authentic aura.

Festivals, as moments of *kastom* as well as commodification, are competitive. *Kastom* unites, but it divides as well, as it did in the past. Old *kastom* rivalries between villages that continue to exist are now fought out in festivals, on commercial ritual grounds. People charge money to safeguard the authenticity of their sites and objects, or what they wish to present as authentic. They achieve this by controlling tourist access. To the tourist, access conveys authentic experience. Their respective desires meet somewhere in the middle. The opening up of ritual sites at controlled moments generates income while at the same time providing an authentic experience to tourists (since they are among ‘the lucky few’). The quest for authenticity, for the authentic experience or ‘the real thing’, is catered for by the authentic ‘native’. This too generates ambivalence. That, nowadays, only a few men partake in male-graded ritual generates discussion and disagreement on the local level, not least about who holds these rights (*kopiraet*) and about the nature of *kastom*. What is brought on to the stage is some sort of bricolage of ritual, fragments of the vast and powerful ritual complexes of the past in which sacred and secular elements were combined and which consumed a lot of peoples’ energies and resources. On the other hand, wearing the paraphernalia that were once signs of status and prestige gives pride to the wearer and, in the right circumstances, renewed status and prestige. Underlying the positive material benefits made through sales to tourists and several other kinds of art collectors is an ongoing concern by all

– ‘hosts’ and ‘guests’ alike – that these sorts of transactions are involved in issues of appropriation and cultural loss.

Notes

1. Then Cambridge students John Layard and A. B. Deacon carried out ethnographic fieldwork in Vanuatu in 1914–1915 and 1926–1927. Layard, a pupil of W. H. Rivers at Cambridge, worked in northeast Malakula (Vao, Atchin and Wala). Deacon, a pupil of A. C. Haddon, worked in southwest Malakula and briefly on Ambrym. He died in Southwest Bay nearing the end of his fieldwork. Layard only published some of his findings, abundant with data, in 1942 (on Vao; volumes on Atchin and Wala were supposed to follow but never did), while Deacon’s work, based on fieldwork only some years later but of a rather pessimistic ‘salvage anthropology’ kind, was posthumously published in 1934.
2. There is a vast body of literature on the emergence of the politicized concept of *kastom* (‘custom’); for discussions, see, amongst others, Bolton 1993; 1994; 2003; 2007; 2011; Jolly 1982; Lindstrom 1994; 1997; Tonkinson 1982). The terms *kalja* and *tredisin* (‘culture’, ‘tradition’) were first used in the radio program *Kastom, Kalja, and Tredisin* in the 1970s, so introducing them in Bislama vocabulary (Bolton 2003: 29). It took until the 1990s until the word kalja was used by people in the islands (*ibid.*).
3. I have published another overview of the *Back to my Roots* festival as DeBlock (2013).
4. For a discussion of slit drum designs, see Patterson (1996). Patterson illustrates that what is now considered to be the typical Ambrym-style slit drum also occurred in southeast Malakula, at least until the early twentieth century, and that it was probably an item of trade or a return payment for the acquisition of ritual between southeast Malakula and western Ambrym, areas which are known to have operated a system of ritual commerce (see Patterson 1981; 1996; 2001; 2002). For an overview of traditional trade links, see Bonnemaison (1996), Huffman (1996).

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Chapter 14

‘It was harder before; we lived by the market’: Hopes and fears of a market-free future in East New Britain

Keir Martin

Introduction

The devastation of Rabaul Town on 14 September 1994 marked a turning point in the history of post-independence Papua New Guinea (PNG). Of the country’s four major regional centres, Port Moresby, Lae, Madang and Rabaul, only the latter was spoken of with any affection. Rabaul was largely viewed as a safe and pleasant place to live in which a long-standing Chinese community, white expatriates and local Papua New Guineans lived side by side in an environment whose cosmopolitan qualities were appreciated and valued by most.[1]

Rabaul was frequently referred to as ‘the Jewel of the Pacific’ and has now become a focus of romantic nostalgia for many, now that it has largely been devastated by the eruption and the decision to relocate the provincial capital to the less attractive town of Kokopo.

Elsewhere (Martin 2013), I have discussed the ways in which this nostalgia varies among residents of the area, with white expatriates tending to have a fairly uncomplicated nostalgia, while for local Tolai the nostalgia is sometimes fused with an ambiguous feeling that the town was in some respects a mixed blessing. In this article, I aim to explore one aspect of what made Rabaul Town so special in the eyes of so many, namely its famous market, and to probe the significance of the different visions of the

market in informing different hopes for the future. In particular, I want to describe briefly the ways in which the tension between the Rabaul Town market on the one hand and wider visions of the market as a global phenomenon or economic abstraction on the other have been central to both anthropological and local understandings of its significance during a period of several decades. Viewed from some perspectives, at least, Rabaul Town market has always been seen as a location for social dynamics that act very much in opposition to a wider market orientation, although the way in which that tension manifests itself and its wider social significance might itself vary significantly across the generations.

Contemporary observers often commented on Rabaul Town market as one of the town's main attractions, and it is still often remembered romantically by those who reminisce about Rabaul's past glories today. It has been comprehensively studied anthropologically, most famously by T. S. Epstein and Richard Salisbury, who conducted a joint study of it in the early 1960s. Epstein was keen to stress that the colonial-era market was not an entirely unprecedented experience for the Tolai and that it could be seen as a development of previous indigenously organized 'markets' that the first colonial administrators, traders and missionaries encountered in the 1870s. This is consistent with Epstein's main thesis, that the Tolai were uniquely prepared for their position as an economic and cultural elite in post-war New Guinea by virtue of their cultural predisposition towards entrepreneurial activities and their more market-friendly attitude than other native groups, an argument neatly summarized in the title of her 1968 monograph, *Capitalism, Primitive and Modern.*

Epstein's position has often been criticized in the years since for attributing a market morality of commodity trade to transactions that might better be viewed through the conceptual framing of gift exchange (most notably in Gregory 1980). In particular, her reading of early colonial-era descriptions of Tolai exchange practices could easily be criticized for unproblematically accepting observers' use of terms such as 'buying', 'selling' and 'profit' at face value. Nonetheless, it is also true that the main customary Tolai exchange item, *tabu*, a form of shell wealth, has long been

used in contexts that anthropologists might conventionally describe as both customary gift exchange and marketized commodity transaction.

When Malinowski (1922: 96) describes the difference between the *kula* gift-exchange cycle that is the focus of his attention and the more market-like practice that appears alongside it, the *vay'gua* shell-wealth items that make up the *kula* are separate from *gimwali*, in which objects are directly bartered. Malinowski's description does not seem to encompass the possibility of the *vay'gua* passing from the *kula* to *gimwali* as a medium of market exchange before then re-entering the *kula* again. In the case of Tolai *tabu* this has been possible for as long as the ethnographic record goes back, and it continues to this day, when, for example, *tabu* might be ceremonially distributed to members of a related clan at a mortuary feast, such as a *minamai*, some of whom might go and buy cigarettes or betel nut from other distantly related or unrelated Tolai trading at the edge of the ritual, who might then use it for their own ceremonial gift-exchange purposes at a later date. The point here is that, while Epstein may sometimes be criticized for presuming that a market logic underpins the circulation of *tabu*, particularly in face-value readings of early colonial accounts, it is still the case that the exchange of customary wealth among the Tolai has long been described as carrying a far greater potential to embody those kinds of logics than similar customary wealth items described in other parts of PNG.

Epstein claims that early colonial-era meetings involving the exchange of *tabu* are best described as markets. This description is tempered, however, by her corollary observation that the modern Rabaul Town market of the 1960s did not only, or even predominantly, operate by market principles, at least as those might be conventionally defined economically. Epstein observes that the market was 'referred to by natives and non-natives alike by the vernacular[2] term *bung*', and it is here that a vernacular ambiguity begins to point us towards an important conceptual ambiguity. For although *bung* is the vernacular term that Tolai used to describe a market, it also describes so much more, being the word for all sorts of meetings, such as church groups, community groups, some kinds of customary exchanges or even just the chance meeting of two friends on the

road. Hence to translate *bung* simply as ‘market’ runs the risk of implying that it embodies the same kinds of principles that an economically minded European observer might assume. And here, Epstein’s ethnographic analysis remains useful, as she carefully outlines the ways in which Tolai women coming in to the town market do not buy and sell their goods according to economic market principles. She observes that: ‘The Tolai obviously regarded the *bung* not only as a place where goods may be bought and sold, but even more as a social meeting place’ (Epstein 1968: 136–137).

The reasons she gives for this are interesting, as in effect she reverses the analysis of the earlier parts of her monograph, where she suggests that Tolai socio-cultural relations predisposed them to individual entrepreneurship in the early days of colonial contact. In the final chapter, which deals with the nature of the Rabaul market, she now suggests that those very same

> social considerations thus impeded the development of professional market traders, who, from an economic point of view, would have been much more efficient vendors and would have considerably reduced the cost of trading. (*ibid*.: 164)

Epstein describes how Tolai women ‘were not interested in subordinating the social advantage of their market visits to economic gains’ (*ibid*.: 145). This was not just a matter, as she describes it, of too many vendors showing up even when they knew there was an over-supply, as they wanted to enjoy the social experience of being at the market. It was also a case that their social ties to each other led to them not to act towards potential customers as she had seen market traders acting ‘in Asia or at Camden Town’ (*ibid*.: 142). In these cases, traders would actively attempt to pull in customers by approaching them and proclaiming the superiority of their wares over those of their rivals. At Rabaul market, by contrast, the women sat quietly with their produce and never bargained or attempted to undercut other sellers. Given the nature of Tolai kinship, many of the women could trace kinship ties to other traders, even those from distant villages, and they would often

mind each others' produce when one of their number wanted a break. Epstein describes a situation in which a woman from Volavolo village left some tomatoes in the care of a woman from another village over fifteen miles away. The second woman seemed remarkably unconcerned whether vendors bought her tomatoes or those of the woman from Volavolo, making no effort to induce them to buy her own. Epstein describes this as being due to their being affines and as a specific example of the ways in which 'the network of kinship and personal relations further neutralises competition' (Epstien 1969: 144). Hence Epstein's description portrays an interesting paradoxical relationship between market relations and non-market customary relations in Tolai life. On the one hand, the Tolai had always had markets in which *tabu* operated as a medium of commodity exchange and which had left them less hampered than other New Guinea natives by the kinds of customary and kinship-based relations that were and still are often described as barriers to the emergence of entrepreneurial activity. On the other hand, her immediate ethnographic observations after nearly a century of this incorporation into colonial global markets revealed that these customary relations of kinship networks operated at the heart of the most modern market that the region had ever seen and in fact stopped it operating as a market in certain senses of the term, blocking competition and stopping the women involved from actually becoming 'market traders'.

Market dependencies

Epstein gives an additional reason why the traders at Rabaul market had not become 'market traders', namely their lack of dependence upon market trade to provide them with incomes. She observes that:

This lack of competitive spirit and absence of 'sales drive' may be explained by a number of different but interdependent factors. Most important was the fact that … *none of the vendors was dependent for her livelihood on her income from trading*. Moreover, as we have seen, Tolai, in particular those coming from the interior (who supplied most fruit and vegetables to the market), were still living by subsistence production and their cash requirements were limited. There was thus not the urgency or

incentive for sellers to maximise their gains by underbidding their neighbours. Market trade was regarded as a welcome addition to cash or tambu[3] wealth rather than as a necessary means to earning a living. (Epstein 1968: 143, emphasis added)

Although this might have been the case in the early 1960s, it was no longer entirely true for all Tolai villagers by the time of the volcanic eruption in 1994. Epstein notes that the latter still lived by subsistence and therefore had limited cash needs, this being particularly true for inland villages such as the village of Rapitok, which was the main focus of her field research. Coastal Tolai villages close to Rabaul Town, such as Matupit, were far more intimately tied into the urban cash economy. Although these villagers could live off subsistence and garden produce in the 1960s, by comparison to villages such as Rapitok many young Matupi lived mainly from cash. Many of them worked in Rabaul Town and ate larger amounts of store-bought 'European'-style food than other villagers. Matupit was studied in the early 1960s by Epstein's husband, A. L. (Bill) Epstein, who documented this shift taking place. In the late 1980s, Matupit acquired its second ethnographer, Jacob Simet, himself a Matupit resident who returned to his home village to conduct field research on *tabu* as part of his PhD at the Australian National University. What Simet documented was a situation in which the tendencies described by Bill Epstein had intensified to the point where in many respects it was legitimate to describe the Matupi as being dependent on the market.

Matupit, being only a small island[4] is mostly a residential place. The islanders' traditional gardening areas were on the mainland. Today most of this traditional land has been planted with copra and cocoa. The Matupit no longer do any 'serious gardening' … The shortage of land makes it difficult for the Matupit to maintain some aspects of their traditional life. For instance, much of their diet today consists of imported foods, such as rice, bread, biscuits, tinned-meat, tinned-fish. *For more traditional foods such as bananas, taro and aibika (spinach), the Matupit have to depend very heavily on the town market.*

The Matupit are very much tied to the town for their livelihood. They engage in village-based economic activities such as fishing, collecting megapode eggs, and preparing food for sale in town. The fish, the eggs and the food, all have to be sold in town for money. (Simet 1991: 16–17, emphasis added)

In contrast with the early 1960s, Simet describes the Matupi of a quarter of a century later as being dependent upon the market as both vendors and vendees, relying on it for the purchase of all sorts of produce that they previously might have grown themselves. This in turn makes many of them dependent upon the money they might make selling produce that they can directly acquire in town. In the early 1990s many Matupi had access to cash from wage labour, but for those who did not the petty trading activities that Simet describes – selling fish, eggs and prepared food, mainly at the town market studied by Epstein a quarter of a century earlier – was the only way to raise the necessary cash. Unlike the more isolated Tolai villagers, who remained in the situation described by Epstein, of having a less dependent relationship with the market from a subsistence base, the Matupi were now forced to engage with it for their day to day livelihoods.

After the volcano

The volcanic eruption of 1994 introduced a further change into Matupit's relations with the market. By the time I arrived there in 2002, the Matupit community had become geographically split between two locations. The provincial government wanted to evacuate the villages around Rabaul Town. These villages were seen as being at risk from further volcanic activity and, given their reliance on a town that the provincial government had decided not to rebuild for similar reasons, they were no longer considered economically viable. The provincial government offered to move the population of Matupit to a relocation camp deep inland, in the virgin rainforest location of Sikut. The Matupi were expected to change from having been one of the most urbanized groups of villagers in PNG for several decades to being more isolated than even the most supposedly 'backward' of their Tolai cousins in villages such as Rapitok. Most of them

found the transition difficult, and in addition many of them were not allocated the three-hectare blocks that the provincial government had promised them so that they could rebuild their lives as cash-crop farmers, as the process of allocation was held up by land shortages and legal problems. Under the circumstances, many of them returned to Matupit, despite the provincial government's attempts to block their return.

At the time of my arrival approximately 1600 people had their main residence at Matupit and 900 at Sikut, although many were attempting to maintain interests at both locations. Despite the fact that not all Matupit residents had been offered the chance to acquire a resettlement block, not all of those who had returned to Matupit lacked one. Many had found the new rainforest environment uncomfortable, some did not have the resources to clear the forest on their blocks to begin cash cropping, and others had planted on the land but only occasionally visited to harvest the fruits of their investments, leaving a family member or a poorly paid relative to guard the property in their absence. This led to a great deal of resentment on the part of many Sikut residents, in particular those who were still waiting for blocks and living in the so-called care centre at the heart of the settlement, who looked enviously at the empty blocks going to waste while their own lives were trapped in limbo. Many of those who had committed themselves to the move to Sikut would often contrast themselves and their lives with those who had not made the move or whose commitment was felt to be half-hearted. The Sikut residents tended to view themselves as forward-looking pioneers who were making a new life for themselves, in contrast with those 'back at home' at Matupit who were considered to be stuck in the past and were looked down on for not making the effort to build a new life under new circumstances.

The first striking observation about this narrative is the way in which it inverts a common assumption that the urban is modern and progressive, that the rural represents the past and that the passage from backward tradition to progressive modernity is largely coterminous with the move from the countryside to the town. Here the opposite is the case: it is those who have left the town to move to the countryside who are cast as the pioneers of modernity and self-reliance and those who remain behind in town who are

cast as backward and dependent. And at the heart of this characterization is also a relationship between the market and customary relations that is at least as seemingly paradoxical as that described by Epstein in the early 1960s. It is an understanding of the 'market', in both senses of the word – that is, as a physical location, and as an abstract description of the basis upon which global economic exchange is founded – that is central to understanding the paradox.

The Sikut pioneers are presented, at least by themselves, as being both self-sufficient and as actively oriented towards the global market. They are keen to stress that they grow most of their own food with their own labour on their own land, unlike their relatives back at Matupit, who rely on the town market for it (as they themselves would have done before the eruption). They are also keen to stress that they are improving their lives by developing cash crops on their new land. Even if they no longer have access to the sources of financial self-improvement that were available to them when they lived on the edge of the urban economy, they wish to make it clear that they are adaptable enough to take advantage of their new opportunities, in contrast to those who have returned home.

Indeed, it is this lack of reliance on the market for their subsistence that is often described as the difference between themselves and those 'back home.' Those who returned are often described as having been made lazy by a pre-eruption life-style that meant that they could simply buy food at the market without having to dig it out of the earth with their own hands. Those back at Matupit are often characterized as being unable to make the change from an easy life and as such have been unable to shift from their reliance on the town market, even if this means living in the ruins of their former village, still covered with volcanic ash, and even if it also means making themselves increasingly dependent upon relatives with access to money in a manner that is often viewed as an abuse of customary reciprocal obligations. The irony here is that the Sikut residents will sometimes describe their lives as easier even though they consider themselves as working harder. Life back at Matupit is viewed, not without cause, as being a constant struggle to survive *without* hard work. A person might dig up some eggs once in a while or catch some fish to sell at the market. She

might get lucky and plan successfully to bump ‘accidently’ into a distant relative in town, who might then feel obliged to give her some money in recognition of their chance meeting. The act of acquiring money without having to work for it might involve a lot of frustrating hanging around and hoping for a lucky break, which, even if it involves less physical exertion than working on a food garden, can be viewed as far more difficult to sustain. From the Sikut perspective, those who avoid hard work gain the just rewards for their sloth in the form a life full of frustration and the exhaustion of their demoralizing dependence on others.

Something of this is contained in the quotation in the title of this paper, which comes from a conversation I had with a man at Sikut early on in my fieldwork. He was living in the care centre waiting to be allocated a block. The care-centre residents were allocated a hectare of land on which they were not allowed to plant permanent crops such as cocoa trees, though they could plant all the garden food they wished. Although this meant that he was stuck in limbo with regard to building a new life for himself and earning a cash income, it also meant that he never had to worry about having enough food for his family on a day to day basis. In this regard his life was easier than it was in the months after the eruption but before he moved to Sikut, when he had to live by the market and could never be certain on a day-to-day basis how he was going to gain access to the goods he needed. By extension, therefore, his life today was so much easier than living by the market continued to be for those who were still at Matupit. By choosing to be lazy and continuing to remain reliant on the market, those who remained at Matupit had made life more difficult for themselves. And in so doing they had given up on the opportunity to make money for themselves by engaging in the global market through cash cropping. My informant hoped that, by showing commitment to the Sikut project by staying there with his family for years in the care centre, he would be front of the queue when new blocks came to be allocated. By refusing to be dependent on the town market, he was hoping to create a situation in which he could engage in global commodity markets as an active participant, in so doing removing himself from the position of being dependent upon others and trapped by dependence on traditional customary relations, as he

described many of those back at at Matupit being. For the Sikut pioneers, it is their ability to break their reliance on the town market as consumers that potentially enables them to engage with the global market as producers, in contrast to a common vision of the spread of the market as an economic system in which an increased reliance upon it for consumption encourages increased reliance upon selling commodities that one owns or has produced, including most fundamentally one's labour power.

The people at Matupit are therefore cast as backward because they have chosen to continue to live by the town market, this being what prevents them from becoming pioneers and forces them into relations of customary dependence. Again the paradox is that it is the urban dwellers who are the victims of backward anti-individualizing custom, and even more strikingly, *it is their reliance on the market* that is central to that portrayal. In the past they might have made more money at Matupit and Rabaul in ways that are no longer as available. Today those who are left are far more reliant on kinship networks that look like dependence, not reciprocity. For most of them, sourcing money to spend in the market represents a certain kind of dependence. And even those who survive in large part by selling at the market tie themselves to living by piecemeal opportunist market transactions. This decision is then portrayed as keeping them excluded from engaging with the wider global markets in a manner that might enable them to build more secure and self-reliant lives.

The market as place of modernity

As a physical location, the market is often imagined to be the birthplace of modernity, stimulating demand for consumption and production that pulls people out of tradition and custom. The market as a place is the location from which 'market' relations that are characteristic of economic theory emanate. One might imagine the market as a place which attracts money to circulate at high velocity before flowing through the surrounding regions to draw people into increasing reliance on marketized relations, thus breaking down, for example, the barriers that protected customary life from commercial life in the past. It is easy to imagine the market as a central place in the role that money might have played for previous generations of

anthropologists, most notably Bohannan, in breaking down the barriers between the commercial and non-commercial spheres of economic life and instituting the primacy of the former over the latter. After 30 years of criticism, Bohannan's position has become one that is now primarily familiar to anthropologists as the template for what we do not do anymore, namely attributing a malign fetishistic power to money as breaking down social spheres through commodification (e.g. Bloch and Parry 1989; Maurer 2006). But while the implied teleology of Bohannan's formulation of a customary world in which social life is divided into spheres that are broken down by markets and money might be open to question, the deeper question that his perspective raises, namely the role of money and markets in attempts to create and dissolve the social barriers that divide life into different spheres, remains as pertinent as ever. Indeed, economic development might just as easily involve attempts to use markets and money to demarcate social life into different spheres as much as allowing it to dissolve preexisting separations. For example, take the emerging post-independence political and economic elite in PNG, the widely denigrated so-called 'Big Shots'.

As I have described elsewhere, they often seek to separate 'custom' rhetorically from other spheres of life, most notably 'business'. In doing so they are attempting to create a separation between different spheres of life that did not need to be separated before. Their purpose here is twofold. First, in separating a market exchange sphere of life called 'business' from 'custom', they hope to insulate and protect their financial investments in the former sphere from demands that could be made on them in the latter sphere on the basis of ongoing reciprocal obligations. Secondly, by rhetorically separating customary from market relations, they hope to counter the criticisms of grassroots villagers that their money 'corrupts' custom through, for example, bulk purchases of *tabu* using state currency that they have acquired through business or political activities (see Martin 2013). Although using *tabu* as a medium of commodity exchange in the town market did not seem to threaten its ritual efficacy in the past, by the early 2000s its emergence as a commodity to be traded in global markets, with Big Shots going to other parts of the South Pacific to purchase shells

for *tabu* in bulk, did appear to threaten its customary status, at least when viewed from particular social perspectives.

As far as different spheres of exchange are concerned, this situation appears to throw up a number of contradictory perspectives. From the viewpoint of the Big Shots, it is hoped that the conceptual separation of market relations from customary relations will preserve the purity of custom and make them the legitimate heirs of the Big Men of the past that they sometimes present themselves as being. However, the very act of separating off customary relations from other spheres of life implies protecting market morality from non-market morality as much as vice versa, thus inherently marking a change from the idealized picture of the past in which the customary ethics of reciprocal obligations permeated all aspects of social life. From the grassroots perspective, the attempted separation of a sphere of life called 'business' in which market morality overrides customary morality is itself a major change that negatively distinguishes the Big Shots from the Big Men of the past. But even though the grassroots bemoan this separation, in a way their complaints are also paradoxically based on a belief that the separation is not complete. For although the separation protects the Big Shots' money from customary demands, in the eyes of many of their grassroots critics it does not protect custom from the damaging effects of *tabu*'s increasing immersion in new circuits of market exchange. What both positions implicitly share is that, justified or not, the new world is contrasted with the old by virtue of an increasing separation of social life into a market-oriented sphere and a sphere of life dominated by different moralities of exchange, a picture that provides an interesting reversal of that painted by Bohannan for the Tiv in which the new order was one in which money acted as a technology for the breaking down of such separations and the spread of market relations across social life.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the Kuanua word *bung* has several meanings, not all of which translate easily as 'market'. Indeed, while the Rabaul market of the 1960s studied by Epstein appeared to be a *bung* in this sense of the word, as

evidenced by its description as a 'market' in English, what Epstein's analysis uncovered was that it was also a *bung* in other, perhaps more fundamental senses, a meeting place whose primary dynamics were not those of the 'market' as an economic abstraction. Indeed, in both the 1960s and today Rabaul market can be viewed as a powerful site for the incubation of 'non-market' social principles. In the past, Epstein had described non-market mechanisms as being hidden inside the market, waiting to be exposed by the careful ethnographic observation of the visiting anthropologist.

Today, the town market is seen as encouraging non-market principles, but in a different manner. Rabaul market no longer acts as a giant meeting place for people from the whole Tolai area as it did in Epstein's time. The destruction of Rabaul means it no longer serves that purpose, and the market that does take place there only serves local villages such as Matupit and is a far less impressive affair than the pre-eruption market is described as having been. But, from the perspective of Sikut at least, it still embodies the false promise of an easy unproductive life in which you just buy your food rather than heaving it out of the ground. This was a promise which earlier generations in Matupi might have been able to sustain, but it is said to be sustainable today only through laziness and dependence on others. The town market keeps people away from active participation in the global market, and whereas dependence on it for consumption might have been tied to active engagement in the vibrant urban economy of the late 1980s, today this is represented as leading to an illegitimate and unproductive form of dependence on others that is increasingly seen as a kind of moral sickness. Far from encouraging active and productive engagement with global markets, from the Sikut perspective, at least, the Rabaul Town market is characterized as a force that discourages such engagement and keeps the urban Matupi trapped in backward relations of customary dependence.

Notes

1. Although see Neumann (1996) for an argument that this image was itself the result of a degree of deliberate romanticism and was

becoming increasingly hard to maintain even in the run up to the eruption.

2. That is, in the Tolai vernacular *Kuanua*.
3. In common with some other authors, Epstein prefers the word *tambu* to *tabu* to describe Tolai customary shell wealth. I use the latter spelling as it is closer to the pronunciation I heard during my fieldwork at Matupit, and it is also that preferred as correct by the Tolai-born anthropologist Jacob Simet.
4. In the late nineteenth century, Matupit was an island separated from the southern edge of Rabaul Town by a small stretch of water. In the twentieth century, it became connected to the mainland by a small strip of land and is today technically a peninsula, although it is still often referred to as an 'island'. By the 1950s, Rabaul Town had spread so far south on to what was traditionally Matupit customary land that Matupit itself was often referred to as a 'peri-urban' suburb of Rabaul Town, only being separated from the town by its airport and a golf course.

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